

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

LAND USE AGENCY

810 COURT STREET • JACKSON, CA 95642-2132 • PHONE (209) 223-6439 • FAX (209) 223-6228



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Michael W. Israel, Director of Environmental Health – (209) 223-6439

Free Kits Offered to Encourage Residents to Test Homes for Radon, the Second Leading Cause of Lung Cancer in U.S.

Amador County Department of Environmental Health is offering residents a limited number of free radon test kits during the month of January 2010, National Radon Action Month. Fifty free test kits to test homes or buildings for radon will be available on a first come, first served basis.

The Amador County Environmental Health Department is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which is conducting a nationwide campaign to educate Americans about the dangers of radon exposure and to encourage them to take action to protect their homes and families. Because of the wide spread occurrence of granite in Amador County there is a higher probability of having elevated radon levels compared to other locations.

Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that is dispersed in outdoor air but can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. Scientists have long been concerned about the health risk of radon, but there is now overwhelming proof that exposure to elevated levels of radon causes lung cancer in humans. EPA estimates that radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. "However," says Dr. Bob Hartmann, Amador County Public Health Officer "because you can't see or smell radon, people tend to downplay the health effects and ignore the possibility that there might be a silent killer in their homes."

Testing homes for elevated levels of radon is simple and inexpensive. Radon problems can be fixed by qualified contractors for a cost similar to that of many common home repairs such as painting and roof repair. Though one might be tempted to estimate the probability of encountering elevated radon in their home based on test results of other homes in their area, the only way to know for sure is to test because it truly is a house to house issue. The purpose in providing free and low cost testing is to encourage everyone to test.

In addition to the free test kits available through the Amador County Environmental Health Department, during January radon test kits can be purchased through the California Department of Public Health Indoor Radon Program for \$5.00.

The Amador County Environmental Health Department urges residents to take action during this year's National Radon Action Month by testing their homes for radon and eliminating this serious threat to our community's health. To obtain a free radon test kit (supplies limited), contact Amador County Environmental Health Department at (209) 223-6439. For more information on radon, ordering the \$5.00 test kit, mitigation, and radon-resistant new construction, call **the California Department of Public Health Indoor Radon Program** at [916-449-5674] or visit their Web site at [<http://cdph.ca.gov/radon>], or visit EPA's National Radon Action Month Web site at www.epa.gov/radon/nram.