



**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Public and Indian Housing**

Special Attention:

NOTICE PIH 2013-06 (HA)

Public Housing Agencies administering the
Housing Choice Voucher and/or Public
Housing Programs; Public Housing Field Office
Directors

Issued: February 4, 2013

Expires: Effective until amended
superseded, or rescinded

Cross References:

Subject: Radon Information for PIH Programs

1. **Applicability:** This Notice applies to public housing agencies (PHAs) that administer the Public Housing and/or Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) programs.
2. **Purpose:** The purpose of this Notice is to provide information to PHAs on the dangers of radon.
3. **Background:** In June 2011, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in collaboration with HUD and various other federal agencies released the Federal Radon Action Plan. This plan, found at http://www.epa.gov/radon/action_plan.html, represents a multi-year effort to protect the public and reduce the risk of radon exposure.

Radon is an odorless, colorless gas which is a decay product of elements in soil and rock. Under certain natural conditions, radon gas can enter the air and become hazardous. Radon is present in every part of the country, even though concentrations vary depending on geologic conditions. When radon gas enters a building, it can be inhaled directly, or attach to dust on walls, floors or in the air. Breathing in high concentrations of radon gas may result in mutations in lung tissue which may lead to lung cancer. As concentrations of radon gas increase, the risk of contracting lung cancer from radon also increases. In fact, radon exposures are estimated to result in approximately 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year in the United States.¹

Radon generally poses the greatest risk to occupants living at or below ground level. Occupants on the lower levels of structures are at greater risk of excess exposure if high radon concentration levels are present and if these structures are not appropriately mitigated. They are also at greater risk if high radon concentration levels are present and they occupy new construction built without using radon resistant construction methods. The best way to mitigate radon is to prevent it from ever entering a building. The EPA recommends mitigation for residences with radon concentrations at or above 4 picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L).² Please

1 EPA Assessment of Risks from Radon in Homes, June 2003, publication number EPA 402-R-03-003, available at <http://www.epa.gov/radiation/docs/assessment/402-r-03-003.pdf>.

2 EPA. A Citizen's Guide To Radon, May 2012, publication number EPA 402/K-12/002, available at <http://www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/citizensguide.pdf>.

check with your individual state or regional authorities for local radon policies. Further information on mitigation strategies and maps of radon zones around the country can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/radon/index.html>. The Department will continue to examine ways that radon and mitigation testing may be incorporated into HUD-assisted housing program requirements. PHAs are strongly encouraged to proactively plan and complete radon testing and follow-up with mitigation strategies if possible, especially when excessive radon levels are present.

- 4. Information Contact:** Inquiries about this Notice should be directed to Tobey Zimmer 202-402-6230.

/s/
Sandra B. Henriquez, Assistant Secretary for
Public and Indian Housing