

Sample

Press Release

Send a press release to the media to announce your radon campaign and increase your community's awareness of radon issues. A well written press release can yield more media coverage than any amount of advertising. Here are a few steps to take to ensure you get the coverage you deserve.

- ▶ Keep your press release concise. Reporters and editors don't have time to read through lots of text. Your press release should be no longer than one page and should focus on the facts and the call to action for your community.
- ▶ Grab their attention. At the upper left-hand margin, just under your letterhead, you should have the words "For Immediate Release" in bold, capital letters.
- ▶ Make it easy for them to learn more. Somewhere near the top of the page, list your contact information including your name, title, telephone numbers, fax number, and e-mail address. Also, indicate if you have health or other experts on hand to provide interviews.
- ▶ Include a headline such as "Health Risks in Our Community: How You Can Protect Your Family".
- ▶ Include a dateline or the city and state from which the press release is issued.
- ▶ Craft a lead paragraph. The first paragraph should grab the reader's attention and contain relevant information, such as the five Ws (who, what, when, where, and why) if you're publicizing an upcoming event.



The sample release on the next page can serve as a guide for creating your own. Be sure to time the release during or near National Radon Action Month. Or, if your radon campaign activities will occur during an alternate time, send this out to fit your schedule. Print the letter on your organization's stationary and fill in local information where **[indicated]**. You may also wish to tailor this release to announce a special event, press conference, or other local campaign activity. See the Media Outreach Tips section on page 21 of this Kit for more information about working with the media.

Sample Press Release *(continued)*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [Point of contact's name and phone number]

PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY'S HEALTH IN THEIR HOMES RADON – A SILENT KILLER

Citizens Urged to Test Homes for Radon, the Second Leading Cause of Lung Cancer in U.S.

[Your city, state, date] — [Organization] is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 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. In our community, [organization] is conducting [briefly describe local radon action activities] during National Radon Action Month in January.

Radon is present at elevated levels in about [X]% of [area] homes (info available from your state radon office). Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that is dispersed in outdoor air, but which can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. Scientists have long been concerned about the health risk of radon, but never before has there been such overwhelming proof that exposure to elevated levels of radon causes lung cancer in humans.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year. Radon is the leading second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. "However," says [spokesperson] from [organization] "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 test kits can be purchased at local hardware and home improvement stores or directly from radon testing companies. Many are priced under \$25.00. Radon problems can be fixed by qualified contractors for a cost similar to that of many common home repairs such as painting or having a new water heater installed (anywhere from \$800 to about \$2,500).

[Organization] urges [community] residents to take action during this year's National Radon Action Month by testing their homes for radon. Radon poses a serious threat to our community's health but there is a straightforward solution. For more information on radon, radon testing and mitigation, and radon-resistant new construction, call [organization] at [organization's phone number] or visit our Web site at [organization's Web site], or visit EPA's National Radon Action Month Web site at www.epa.gov/radon/nram.