

DEQ urging Utahns to test for radon

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The Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Radiation Control, says Utahns should make testing their homes for radon gas a high priority.

Exposure to indoor radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, says DEQ radon manager John Hultquist. "Since elevated levels of radon gas can occur in three out of every 10 homes in Utah, I strongly encourage all Utah residents to test for radon. Testing is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk."

Rock, soil and water can release the radioactive gas, which is a natural decay product of uranium. It is colorless, odorless and tasteless, and officials blame it for about 21,000 deaths each year due to lung cancer in the United States.

Winter is a good time to test, Hultquist said. During January, the tests are discounted to \$6 and can be ordered online at www.radon.utah.gov — people also can get more information there — or by calling 800-458-0145.

If elevated levels are detected, there are various methods for reducing radon concentrations. It can be costly, but lung cancer has only a 15 percent survival rate five years after diagnosis.