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THE WEATHER IS WARMING: A RADON WARNING
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Although the warm weather has returned and more time will be spent outdoors, it is important to make sure that when you are indoors your home and/or business is radon free.

Radon is a gas that cannot be seen, smelled or tasted. Radon is the result of radioactive metals breaking down in rocks, soil and groundwater. Exposure to radon occurs primarily by inhaling the air that comes through cracks and gaps in buildings and homes. Radon comes naturally from the earth, so exposure to small doses of the gas is constant. The amount of exposure that occurs is the critical issue in determining health consequences; therefore, it is important to test your home or business for radon.

High levels of exposure to radon can be deadly. When radon is inhaled, radioactive particles get stuck in your lungs. Exposure to radon over time increases the risk of lung cancer which may take years to appear. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, after cigarette smoking, and accounts for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year in the United States.

The Environmental Protection Agency found that Monongalia County (MC) has a high potential for elevated levels of radon indoors (http://geopub.epa.gov/Radon/), so it is especially important to test your home and/or business for high radon levels if you live or work in MC. Homes or businesses that have radon levels of 4.0 pCl/l (picocuries per liter) or higher should install a system to reduce the amount of radon gas in the atmosphere.

Exposure to radon and the health problems caused by radon are preventable. Radon testing is easy and inexpensive.

The Monongalia County Health Department Environmental Health staff has been trained to test for high radon levels and makes these tests available to the public, home inspectors and Realtors. The test takes forty-eight hours and utilizes continuous Radon Measuring equipment.

For more information about radon or to set up an appointment to have your home and/or business checked, visit http://monchd.org/radon.html or call 304-598-5131.

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