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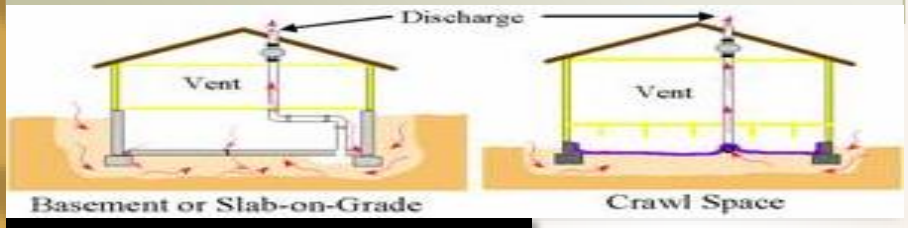
Radon Mitigation & Health Concerns

Sadly, "Radon is a cancer-causing radioactive gas" that one cannot see, taste, or smell (Radon.com, 2009). Radon is the second largest contributor to lung cancer; roughly 20,000 die annually as a result of lung cancer caused by Radon. Radon requires mitigation if Radon levels are higher than 4pCi/L (Radon.com, 2009). According to the Teton County Wyoming Public Health, "Wyoming is a zone 1 Radon area (highest potential to have elevated Radon levels) and of the homes tested in Teton County 37% have elevated levels...with an average level of 8.8 pCi/L" (Rachael Levitz, 2016, para. 3).

To mitigate Radon, techniques can be utilized to either prevent and/or remove Radon. Sub-Slab-Depressurization techniques draw gases from the earth—below slabs—and vent gases away from the building structure. Such a technique removes Radon before it even enters the home (Kansas State University, n.d.). Another method involves sealing the property (for example: cracks and openings in the slab, floors, and walls). This method simply slows the flow of Radon; it does not limit or prevent Radon's ultimate effects—especially since cracks, once sealed, re-open as structures continually settle. In summary, proper ventilation and exhaust systems, in conjunction with sealing, can dramatically reduce exposure to Radon gases (Kansas State University, n.d.).

Radon mitigation can cost on average $2,000. After installing mitigation systems, structures need to be tested 24hrs after installation. Operational costs of exhaust fans are minimal. Once installed, and Radon levels reduce, structures should be tested every two years (Kansas State University, n.d.). Remember, "Radon reduction requires more than just sealing cracks in the foundation. In fact, caulking and sealing of foundation openings, on its own, has proven not to be a reliable or durable technique. However, sealing is done in conjunction with other mitigation steps" (Kansas State University, n.d.).



Picture Courtesy of Kansas State University

The Teton County Public Health Department sells short and long term Radon detection kits. Short term kits cost $10; long term kits cost $25. The Public Health Department is located at 460 E. Pearl Ave, and is open from 8am—5pm

References:

Kansas State University. (n.d.). "Radon Mitigation." National Radon Program Services. Retrieved from: http://sosradon.org/mitigation

Kansas State University. (n.d.) "What is a Radon Mitigation System." National Radon Program Services. Retrieved from: http://sosradon.org/mitigation

Radon.com. (2009). "Radon Fact Sheet." Radon.com. Retrieved from: http://www.radon.com/radon/radon_facts.html

Rachael Levitz. (2016). *Media Release: Teton County Public Health Offers Radon Detection Kits.* TCWPH .

Thursday January 21, 2016: Sustainability Series Presents "Healthy Homes Radon Awareness Month"

Join the panel discussion from 6pm—7pm (140 E Broadway Ste. 25)

Mountain Home Builders—Brent Abrams (Director of Marketing/Project Manager)—(307) 413-0349