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## **Environment Department Offers Free Tests for Detection of Deadly Radon Gas**

(Santa Fe, NM) - The New Mexico Environment Department urges residents to test their homes and businesses for naturally occurring radon – a radioactive gas that causes about 22,000 lung cancer deaths each year in the U.S.

The department – to assist New Mexico residents in testing their homes – has pre-purchased a limited number of test kits and will offer them free to state residents willing to share their test results. Those results will become part of a statewide radon survey. Kits can also be purchased by NM residents at a discounted price of \$7.00 each. Free or purchased kits can be obtained via internet at [www.drhomeair.com](http://www.drhomeair.com) or by calling 1-800-324-5928 and following the directions for the New Mexico Radon Program. All kits include laboratory analysis and postage.

“Radon can go undetected because it is invisible and odorless – testing for radon is the only way it can be detected,” said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. “I urge everyone to make it a priority to test their homes and workplaces for this deadly gas.”

Radon, which filters into homes and other buildings from the soil, causes about seven times the estimated deaths that result from secondhand smoke.

The department, in conjunction with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, have designated January 2010 as Radon Action Month. Radon results from the radioactive decay of uranium, which exists in most soils. Radon enters homes and buildings from soil through basements, crawlspaces and cracks in foundations and slabs. The gas can also be present in drinking water, primarily from private wells. The breakdown of radon releases alpha, beta and gamma radiation damaging lung tissues when inhaled which can result in cancer.

Qualified contractors can fix existing radon problems. Homes can also be built to block the deadly gas. More information on radon is available on the NMED Web page at <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/nmrcb/home.html> or the EPA Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/radon>.

For more information, call Michael Taylor at (505) 827-1093.