



State of Utah

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NEWS RELEASE

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***Governor Herbert Recognizes Utah's High Radon Risk--Declares January
"Radon Action Month"***

Salt Lake City, Utah – Governor Gary Herbert would like more Utahns to be aware of Utah's unique radon gas risk, and has declared January "Radon Action Month." Gov. Herbert hopes to connect more citizens with important health facts that could save lives.

More Americans die of lung cancer than any other cancer, with approximately 22,000 deaths per year attributed to radon exposure. Utah Department of Environmental Quality's Indoor Radon Coordinator, Eleanor Divver, explains that most people don't realize that next to smoking radon is the biggest risk factor for lung cancer. "Utah has the lowest smoking rate, but not the lowest lung cancer rate—and naturally occurring radon is the reason," she said.

Radon is a radioactive, colorless, odorless and tasteless gas that occurs naturally in the soil as an indirect decay product of uranium.

Although Utah leads the nation in residential radon gas exposure (1 in 3 homes vs. 1 in 15 nationally), too few Utah families are having their homes tested—a procedure that costs only \$8. If tests reveal elevated radon, levels can be returned to normal by installing a mitigation system that costs about \$1500. A simple and inexpensive two-day test kit is offered at Radon.Utah.Gov. During cold winters, radon is an even bigger concern since gas levels can silently sky rocket in well-sealed homes.

Highlighting the importance of community awareness, many of Utah's youngest citizens got involved in educating residents about radon dangers through a state-wide poster contest this fall. Five elementary through high school age winners were gathered at the State Capitol last Friday, January 8, to speak with the Gov. Herbert regarding the issue, hoping to promote a more active testing culture within the state. Divver worries that radon does not receive much public awareness, but it should. "When you look at the lung cancer statistics and the role radon plays, it's astounding," she said.

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About DEQ

Established in 1991, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) mission is to safeguard public health and quality of life by protecting and enhancing the environment. DEQ implements state and federal environmental laws and works with individuals, community groups and businesses to protect the quality of Utah's air, land and water. For more information, visit www.deq.utah.gov, follow DEQ on Facebook ([utahdeq](https://www.facebook.com/utahdeq)) and Twitter ([UtahDEQ](https://twitter.com/UtahDEQ)), or call 1-800-458-0145.

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