

RADON TEST RESULTS – 2 DAYS VS. 6.5 MONTHS

In June of 2007, the Fleetwood community was provided information about Radon Testing & Mitigation. That document remains on the Fleetwood Plaza website should you wish to review it again.

The thrust of the article, produced after gathering solid information from three recognized experts including a Duke Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) and two PhD's in the field of Radon and radiation, was that the 2 day radon test is **VERY UNRELIABLE**. The recommended approach was to undertake a minimum test of 91 days – but anything more up to one year is even better.

Some additional recommendations from Dr. Watson, a retired Health Physics professor at UNC were NOT to bring in Mitigation based on only one short term test. Such mitigation costs range from \$1,200 to \$1,500. At minimum, if a short term (2 day) test exceeds the upper limit of 4 PicoCuries/Liter, *do another short term test*, and better yet do a second but long term test. Lastly, he suggested owners would benefit by doing their long term test NOW so you know if you have a problem, do remediation if you so choose, and have the results when a buyer wants to see them (*the Board at that time had recommended all owners do this*).

The following bears out what the experts told us. I purchased a long term test canister (alpha tracker for ~\$23 + \$6 shipping = ~\$29) and hung it in my basement from June 15, 2007 to January 2, 2008 (~6.5 months). The test result came back at 4.0 pCi/L which is right at the upper threshold limit. Since this is not a living area, no remediation would likely be needed or appropriate.

I then purchased a short term test kit (~\$20 + \$7 shipping = ~\$27) and placed that in the same location for 50 hours. This is a vial using charcoal-silica adsorption material. The test result came back at 8.3 pCi/L – or more than double the long term test. Had only the short term test been done, remediation would have been most likely called for by the potential buyer at a cost to the seller of up to \$1,500 (or more – and if the work was satisfactory). Fleetwood has had one remediation that had to be redone due to unacceptable work (another ~\$1,200 +).

The above speaks for its self. Doing a long term test NOW in your unit will tell you if you have a problem, and if you do you can choose to remediate or not. Although there are no guidelines or requirements as to how long the long term test results are good for, Dr. Watson said that any emissions should not change significantly over time using the long term test. In any case you will have the results if and when a buyer wants radon test results and you can avoid the **VERY UNRELIABLE** short term 2 & 3 day tests that will surely cost you \$\$\$\$ if the result exceeds 4.0 pCi/L.

Should you wish to order your own radon test kit, you can go to www.accustarlabs.com and go to Radon Testing Products found at the bottom of the listings in the left margin. The Long Term Alpha Track Test Kit is for three months to one year and currently lists at \$28 (Model #AT100).

Ron Rosenberger, 2/14/08