

Finding a Reliable Radon Contractor in Pennsylvania: What Homeowners Need to Know

When I bought my first home in York County, Pennsylvania, I did all the usual checks. Roof, foundation, plumbing, electrical. I even paid for a home inspection. But nobody mentioned radon. Not the inspector, not the realtor, not the previous owner. It was only later, after a neighbor mentioned testing his basement, that I started looking into it. That is when I learned that York County sits in a radon risk zone, and that finding a reliable radon contractor is not optional if you care about your family's indoor air quality.

Radon is a radioactive gas that comes from the natural decay of uranium in soil. It seeps into homes through cracks in the foundation, gaps around pipes, and openings around sump pump installations. You cannot see it, smell it, or taste it. The EPA estimates that radon causes thousands of lung cancer deaths each year in the U.S. And Pennsylvania has some of the highest radon levels in the country, especially in the southeastern part of the state where York County is located.



THE PIPE'S PROBABLY GOT A SAG

Why Testing Comes First

Before you start thinking about mitigation, you need to know what you are dealing with. Radon testing is simple and inexpensive, but it has to be done correctly. Short-term tests using activated carbon can give you a quick snapshot, but they are sensitive to weather and ventilation conditions. A continuous radon monitor gives readings over time and is harder to fool by opening windows. I recommend starting with a short-term test and, if results come back at 4 picocuries per liter or higher, following up with a long-term test or a continuous monitor.

The EPA action level is 4 pCi/L, but many experts suggest that anything above 2 pCi/L is worth addressing. In York County, I have seen results well above 10 pCi/L in homes that seemed perfectly sealed. That is when you need a [reliable radon contractor](#) who can design a system that actually works for your specific house.

What a Proper Radon Mitigation System Looks Like

Most residential radon mitigation systems use a method called sub-slab depressurization. A contractor drills a hole through the basement floor, inserts PVC piping, and connects it to a radon fan that pulls soil gas from beneath the slab and vents it safely above the roofline. The fan runs continuously, creating negative pressure under the foundation so radon never enters the living space.



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A good installation includes a manometer, a simple U-tube gauge that shows whether the fan is working. If the manometer reads zero, something is wrong. Maybe the fan failed, maybe the PVC piping got blocked, maybe the system was never properly sealed. A reliable radon contractor will explain how to check the manometer and what to do if it stops working. They will also go over the basement and seal every visible crack with radon sealant, especially around floor drains, sump pump openings, and where pipes enter the slab.

I once helped a friend in Lancaster who had a system installed by a general handyman. The PVC piping ran through the garage instead of outside the house, and the fan was undersized. The manometer never moved, but nobody told him what it meant. He assumed the system was working. It was not until we tested with a continuous radon monitor that he realized his radon

levels were still above 8 pCi/L. He ended up calling a specialist to redo the whole setup. That is the cost of not choosing a reliable radon contractor from the start.

What Sets a Reliable Radon Contractor Apart

Radon mitigation is not a side business for most good contractors. It is a specialized trade that requires knowledge of soil dynamics, building science, and local geology. A reliable radon contractor like Dan Jenkins, who works in York County, brings years of experience with the specific soil types and foundation styles common in Pennsylvania. They know that a house on a crawlspace needs a different approach than one with a full basement, and that a home built on fill dirt may require more aggressive ventilation.

When you interview a contractor, ask about their testing process. Do they use a continuous radon monitor for pre-mitigation and post-mitigation testing? Do they guarantee a result below 4 pCi/L? Do they include a manometer and explain how to read it? Do they offer transparent pricing, so you know what the PVC piping, radon fan, radon sealant, and labor will cost before they start? These are signs of professionalism.

Also ask about sump pump installation. Many basements in York County have sump pumps for groundwater control. If the sump pit is not sealed properly, it can be a major entry point for radon. A good contractor will seal the pit with an airtight cover and run the PVC piping directly from the pit into the vent system. That is not always included in a basic quote, so make sure you ask.



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Common Mistakes Homeowners Make

I see three recurring errors when homeowners try to address radon on their own or with an unqualified contractor.

- **Skipping post-mitigation testing.** A system can look perfect and still not reduce radon levels if the fan is undersized or the PVC piping has a leak. Always test after installation.
- **Sealing cracks without addressing soil pressure.** Crack repair alone will not stop radon because soil gas finds new paths. Sub-slab depressurization is the only reliable method.

- **Assuming one system fits all houses.** The size of the radon fan, the diameter of the PVC piping, and the number of suction points depend on your home's footprint and soil permeability. A reliable radon contractor will do a site-specific design.

Basement Ventilation and Indoor Air Quality

Radon mitigation improves indoor air quality, but it is not a cure for every basement issue. If you have moisture problems, mold, or high humidity, those need separate solutions. A good contractor will point that out. They will not promise that a radon fan dries out your basement or fixes a musty smell. They focus on radon, and they do that well.

I have seen homeowners install basement ventilation fans that blow outdoor air into the basement, thinking it dilutes radon. That can actually increase radon levels if the outdoor air is drawn through soil cracks because of pressure differences. Do not experiment. Work with someone who understands how air moves through a house.

Long-Term Peace of Mind

Once a system is installed, it requires very little maintenance. Check the manometer every few months. Keep the radon fan clear of debris. Replace the fan if it stops working. And retest your home every two years or after any major renovation that affects the foundation. Radon levels can change over time as the soil settles or as new cracks develop.

I have recommended Dan Jenkins to friends in York County because he does the job right the first time. He uses continuous radon monitors for pre- and post-testing, he seals every penetrations, and he explains what he is doing. That is what a reliable radon contractor looks like. They give you a system that works and the knowledge to keep it working.



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Final Thoughts

Radon is a serious health risk, but it is also a fixable problem. You do not need to move or live with high levels. You need a reliable radon contractor who designs and installs a system specific to your home. In Pennsylvania, where radon risk zones cover much of the state, that is not an expense to put off. It is an investment in your family's health and your home's value.

Start with a radon test. If the results are high, call a specialist. Ask the right questions. Check references. And choose someone who treats radon mitigation as a profession, not a side job. That is how you get clean air and real peace of mind.