INDOOR AIR MONITORING – RADON ASSESSMENT

The United States Navy is committed to protecting the health of their Sailors, civilian staff, and their families by testing for the presence of indoor radon. Indoor radon is monitored throughout NSA Washington following the Navy Radon Assessment and Mitigation Program and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines for sampling and analyzing radon.

WHAT IS NSA WASHINGTON DOING?

- Following U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Navy and Department of Energy guidelines, the Public Works Environmental division is installing indoor radon monitoring devices in order to identify if there is a radon risk within our facilities.
- Locations with radon found to be above EPA action levels will be mitigated to reduce radon levels. After mitigation is complete, the locations will be re-tested to verify that mitigation measures were effective in reducing radon to below EPA action levels.

WHAT IS RADON?

- Radon is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that is produced by the radioactive decay of naturally-occurring uranium and thorium in the soil and rock. Radon typically moves up through the ground to the air above.
- Outdoor exposure to radon is low and relatively harmless. Radon can be trapped indoors where it can build up over time.
- Basements and rooms on the ground floor typically have the highest levels of trapped indoor radon.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH RISKS OF RADON EXPOSURE?

- Every day we are exposed to radon gas in the air we breathe. As radon decays, radioactive particles are released that can damage lung tissue.
- Prolonged exposure to high-levels of radon can lead to an increased risk of lung cancer.

HOW DOES RADON GET INTO A FACILITY?

- Radon enters a facility from the soil below via simple diffusion through building materials, cracks and structural openings.
- In rare cases radon can also come from water and building materials.

HOW MUCH RADON IS TOO MUCH?

- The EPA and the Navy have developed action levels of 4-20 picocuries/Liter (pCi/L) requiring mitigation within 2 years; and 20-200 pCi/L requiring mitigation within 6 months.

WHAT DO THE DETECTORS LOOK LIKE?

- Detection devices look like small black disc as illustrated below. After they are deployed they should not be disturbed for the one year they will be in place.
- Do not cover any device or move any equipment that moves air (such as a fan) near the device.
- If found out of place, please contact the POC on the card located with the detector.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Information on the NSAW Radon Assessment as well as all of the radon sample results will be posted on the NSAW website at: www.cnic.navy.mil/NSAWRadon

For additional information on the NSAW Radon Assessment contact the NSAW lead for the Radon Assessment, Mitro Subroto (202) 433-0102, subroto.mitro@navy.mil, or the NAVFAC Washington lead, Ed Liu, (202) 433-0154, ed.liu@navy.mil.

Other information sources about radon can be found at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website: www.epa.gov/radon