

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

National Radon Action Month Letter from Captain Randazzo

January 2, 2024

Team Naples,

The United States Environmental Protection Agency has designated January as National Radon Action Month. Our goal is to give you the information you need to make informed decisions for you and your family by increasing your knowledge and understanding of the health effects of radon exposure, the technical aspects of radon, the investigations underway, and where to find subject matter experts to address commonly asked questions about radon.

Please use the NSA Naples Life Health Safety email address for any radon concerns or housing testing questions. One of our professionals will work with you and your landlord to find a solution. Naples_LHS_questions@us.navy.mil

We strongly recommend that if you have health related questions, please consult your primary care medical provider.

Policy information:

The health of its military personnel, civilians, and their families, is a primary concern of the Navy. The Navy started the Navy Radon Assessment and Mitigation Program (NAVRAMP) to locate Navy buildings with elevated radon levels and correct and manage the problem as quickly as possible. The current Navy Radon Policy is established in Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) Environmental Readiness Program Manual, OPNAV M-5090.1, Chapter 25, Section 3.2, Department of the Navy, 25 June 2021.

Local information:

All installations are required by CNIC to test all government-owned or leased properties. Testing intervals and requirements are based on the type of building and its designated use, all information can be found in the 2023 NAVRAMP ([Linked here](#)). It's important to know that the Navy requires testing of all government owned or leased residential buildings every five years.

For Navy-owned and leased properties, the most recent NSA Naples test was completed in June of 2023 ([Linked here](#)). Four units reported levels above the maximum recommended standard according to the EPA. Two of the affected units are on the Support Site and two are off base in government-leased properties. Three of the four properties have already received required mitigation measured, the last will be completed in the coming months.

For off-base (economy housing) it's important to note that EPA radon guidelines are not enforceable, and installations have no authority to measure or mitigate off-base housing in the United States or in Italy. If you are concerned and want your off-base leased home tested, please work with your landlord to coordinate testing and mitigation. NSA Naples Housing is available to help coordinate that conversation, we have English and Italian-speaking counselors standing by to assist with discussing radon testing or mitigation and any other conflicts you may

be having with your landlord, especially if you have problems with non-compliance to lease-directed items.

General radon information:

Radon is a naturally occurring, odorless, colorless, tasteless gas that is produced by the radioactive decay of naturally occurring uranium and thorium in the soil and rock. Radon is a naturally occurring environmental pollutant and is not the result of Navy activities past, or present, at the installation. Although radon levels in outdoor air pose a relatively low threat to human health, indoors, radon can accumulate to high levels, which can pose health risks with prolonged exposure. The EPA estimates that radon causes more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths in the United States each year, second only to smoking, and is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

Although elevated indoor radon can come from water supplies or building materials, the most common source is from the soil under or surrounding a building. The reason is that radon is chemically inert (it does not interact with other substances), so it can usually move unhindered through 3 to 6 feet of soil. Once in contact with building components in soil contact (e.g., slab, foundation, wall, crawlspace), it can easily permeate the building through cracks or openings and in some cases, diffuse through pores in concrete masonry units or even through solid concrete. It is important to note that after radon enters the building from the soil, many factors influence its buildup and retention. Building design, usage, air change rate (a measure of the ventilation rate within a building), occupancy pattern, building shell pressure (buildings under negative pressure typically increase radon entry), and type and operational patterns of a building's heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system have all been shown to affect radon levels within a building. Because none of these building factors, including the soil radon gas concentrations under the building, can be accurately estimated, the only way to know for sure if radon is present at unacceptable levels is to test.

Virtually every building in the world has some potential risk for elevated radon. Therefore, unlike the risks associated with lead-based paint or asbestos, the risk from radon exposure can never be removed—it can only be managed by taking appropriate measures. The precursors of radon (i.e., uranium and thorium) are found in virtually all soil and rock formations worldwide. The EPA and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that corrective actions be taken at 4 pCi/L or higher. The only way to reduce the rate of radon exposure is to test and, if appropriate, mitigate. If mitigation is required, diligence in the form of inspection, maintenance, and periodic retesting is essential to ensure long-term risk reduction.

For questions or concerns, please contact us via Naples_LHS_questions@us.navy.mil.

Very Respectfully,

CAPT John "MLP" Randazzo
Commanding Officer, NSA Naples, Italy

NSA Naples Vision

In everything we do, we will challenge ourselves to be the flagship base in Europe. We will accomplish this through careful planning, professional execution, and intentional communication.

Resources:

- NSA Naples Life Health Safety Email: Naples_LHS_questions@us.navy.mil
- NSA Naples Housing Email: naples_housing@us.navy.mil
- NSA Naples Environmental Services:
<https://cnreurafcnt.cnic.navy.mil/Installations/NSA-Naples/Resources/Environmental-Services/>
- NSA Naples Housing Welcome aboard package: <https://ffr.cnic.navy.mil/Navy-Housing/Housing-By-Region/Europe-Africa-Central/NSA-Naples/>
- NSA Naples Radon notification letter:
<https://ffr.cnic.navy.mil/Portals/76/Navy%20Housing/EURAFCENT/Naples/Hazards/RADON.pdf?ver=FxgWTUeu1SqUMFPImxkyFA%3d%3d>
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Radon Information: <https://www.epa.gov/radon>