Massachusetts Department of Public Health

DPH

Healthy Homes, Healthy Communities: Guide for Environmental Health

Fall 2026

Presented by the Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health
Division of Healthy Homes & Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

Healthy Homes

Division of Healthy Homes and Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention (DHHL)





Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program →



Principles of a healthy home →



Housing forms, guidance, and regulations →



Learn about radon →



Farm labor camps →

12 Principles for Healthy Homes

Housing conditions play a critical role in shaping our health, safety, and quality of life.

The 12 principles highlights standards to help make and keep a home and its occupants healthy, especially our most vulnerable populations.

1. Dry
2. Clean
3. Pest-free
4. Ventilated
5. Safe
6. Contaminant-free
7. Maintained
8. Thermally controlled
9. Accessible
10. Affordable
11. Climate resilient
12. Prepared for emergencies

Extreme Weather, Housing, and Health Impacts



HEAT

- Extreme heat events have claimed more lives in the United States over the past 10 years than any other weather-related event.
- The Housing Code does not require a minimum cooling temperature, but if you are making upgrades, you should consider HVAC upgrades as an important improvement.



FLOODING

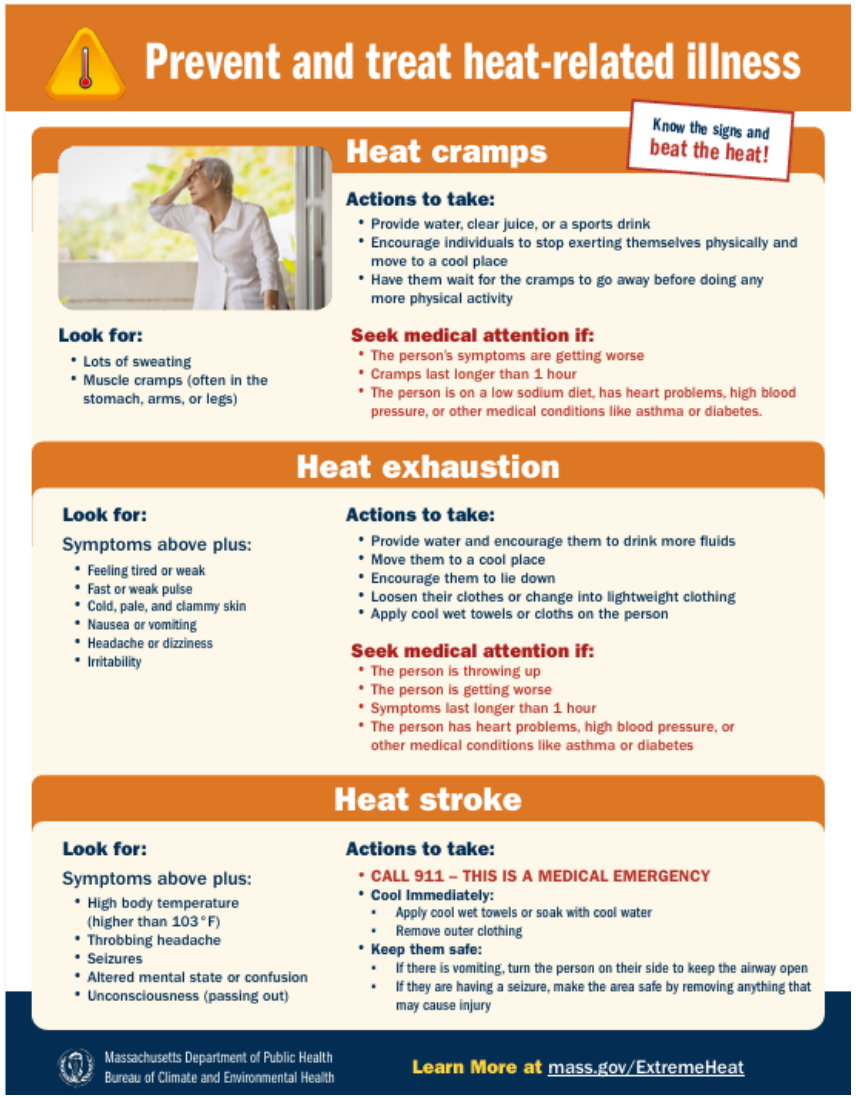
- Physical injury from damage to infrastructure
- Respiratory illness caused by mold exposure
- Increased infestations from pests displaced from flooded burrows
- Mental stress from people being displacement



EXTREME WEATHER

- Carbon monoxide poisoning
- Health impacts from power outages (medical devices)
- Lead exposure from increased exterior paint deterioration

Advisory Fact Sheet



Property managers should take proactive measures to maintain their property and support both occupants and staff during unhealthy heatwaves.

Learn more about how to:

- Plan and Educate
- Hydrate
- Identify or Create Cooler Spaces
- Maintain Your Property

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Part 1
Health and Safety Requirements and the State Sanitary Code

Scott Koczela
Environmental Analyst III, Housing Code Specialist
Division of Healthy Homes & Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention (DHHL)

105 CMR 410.000 Minimum Standards of Fitness for Human Habitation (State Sanitary Code, Chapter II)

Purpose (410.001)

- Provides minimum standards to protect the health, safety, and well-being of occupants
- Provides enforcement procedures for boards of health to ensure compliance
- Facilitates the use of legal remedies available to occupants of substandard housing

Scope (410.002)

- Applies to all residences defined in 105 CMR 410.000
- Residences must also adhere to the State Building Code and all specialized codes
- Duty of local health to identify violations and order correction of violations
- Regulations do not restrict the right of a person to seek relief in court

General Provisions (410.003)

- No owner shall allow occupancy, rent, or occupy as owner-occupant a non-compliant residence
- Owner responsible to provide and maintain all necessary equipment except where noted
- No owner or occupant shall remove or shutoff any service or equipment except for repair
- Owner may only remove owner installed optional equipment when the residence is vacant or prior to a new tenancy
- Occupant is responsible to keep their residence in a sanitary condition

Access:

- Owner is required to provide at least 48 hours' written notice
    - Except for emergency repairs for which no written notice is required
- Occupant is required to allow access upon reasonable notice
- Access shall be at a reasonable time and shall include cooperation required for:
    - Repairs, alterations, pest elimination, and servicing of utilities

Health and Safety Requirements: Pests

410.550

Owner's Responsibility:

- The owner is responsible for pest management
  - **Except** in a residence containing one dwelling unit, where the owner has maintained the exterior of the residence

Occupant's Responsibility:

- The occupant is responsible for pest management of residences containing one dwelling unit
  - **Except** when the owner has failed to maintain the exterior of the building
- Allow access to all areas

Applicator's Responsibility:

333 CMR 13.00: Standard for Application

- ✓ 48 hour's written notice
- ✓ Application date
- ✓ Names, EPS registration numbers, active ingredients
- ✓ Location to be treated
- ✓ Name and number of company applying pesticides



410.550 Elimination of Pests

Health and Safety Requirements: Ventilation

410.160

Excess Moisture: Chronic or Acute



410.220 Natural and Mechanical Ventilation

- Habitable Rooms/Bathrooms
  - ✓ Boards of Health may require mechanical ventilation if natural ventilation is insufficient
    - ➢ Example – A window in a bathroom may not be sufficient ventilation in winter months and mechanical ventilation may be required to prevent excess moisture.
  - ✓ Shutoff unless designed to run constantly or barometrically controlled

Flood or leak cleaned and dried w/in 48 hours



Enforcement Procedures: Excess Moisture, Mold 410.620



Excess Moisture Inspections

- If an inspector discovers excess moisture or appearance of mold, they shall inspect potential sources such as:
  - Plumbing leaks
  - Structural defects
  - Improperly maintained mechanical or natural ventilation
  - Improperly maintained heating, air conditioning or ventilation ductwork
- Environmental testing **shall not** be required to determine the existence of excess moisture or mold
- When testing is conducted the results **shall not** be used as the sole determination of excess moisture or mold

How to Respond to Excessive Moisture

Clean and Dry Impacted Areas

Ventilate and dry the area by:

- Using fans, dehumidifiers and by opening doors and windows, if possible
- If you can visually see the mold, do not use fans because they may further spread mold spores
- If the job is too difficult or dangerous, seek help from an experienced and qualified specialist

Remember:

1. The key to mold control is moisture control
2. Dry all impacted areas within **24-48** hours to prevent mold growth
3. Investigate, locate, and repair the source of the excessive moisture
4. Remove the mold and clean all impacted surfaces
5. Restore all impacted surfaces to their original condition
6. Monitor the area to ensure the source was properly repaired and does not become a repeat concern
7. Download DPH's guidance entitled Mold Cleanup, Repairs, and Excessive Moisture Control: a Step-by-Step Guide for Homeowners.

Owner and Occupant Responsibilities: Signage

Properties that are not owner-occupied shall post signage with the owner's name and if applicable:

- ✓ **Corporation** - Name, address, and telephone number of the president of the corporation
- ✓ **Realty Trust** - Name, address, and telephone number of the president of a corporation if owner is a realty trust or partnership
- ✓ **Property Manager** - Name, address, and telephone number of a property manager if they do not live within the residence



410.400: Owner/Manager Contact Information and Notice of Occupants' Legal Rights and Responsibilities
410.410: Building Identification

Heating & Heating Season

410.160 Heating Systems

- Heating system that includes a distribution system capablee of heating every habitable room and bathroom
- Temperatures in accordance with 410.180
    - At least 68^{0}F (20^{0}C) between 7:00 A.M. and 11:00 P.M.; and
    - At least 64^{0}F (17^{0}C) between 11:01 P.M. and 6:59 A.M.

Does not meet the definition of ***heating system***:

- Fireplace
- Wood/Pellet Stove
- Portable Electric Space Heaters

Prohibited:

- Parlor heaters with a fuel source within 42"
- Portable wick-type space heaters
- Unvented propane/gas not approved by Fire Code

410.180: Temperature Requirements and the Heating Season





Owner and Occupant Responsibilities: Resources

For Assistance Communicating Occupants Responsibilities:

Pest Control Guidance for Renters

Do You Rent Your Home?
Look Out for Pests!

Pests like cockroaches, bedbugs, and rodents can carry diseases that can make people sick. Owners and renters need to work together to prevent pests, or, if you already have pests, to get rid of them and keep them away. Sometimes pesticides or other kinds of extermination are used to kill pests. You must be given at least 48 hours' notice before any kind of extermination is done.

Help, I have pests in my home!

- Tell the owner right away if you see pests like cockroaches or rodents.
- Just like people, pests need food and water to live. Don't make it easy for them!
  - Keep a tight lid on trash cans. Compost carefully and cover food scraps.
  - Clean up left over food and crumbs immediately.
  - Wash dirty dishes right away; don't leave them on the counter or in the sink. When you are done, dry them and drain the sink.
  - Store food like pasta, rice, flour, and cereal in tightly covered containers.
  - Always clean up standing water right away and tell the owner if there is a leaky faucet or pipe in your home.
  - Don't let water sit in, or leak out of, flowerpots or plants.
- Pests also like places to hide:
  - Keep your home clean and free from clutter. Don't store piles of paper bags, newspapers, or cardboard boxes.
  - Check bags and boxes before you bring them into your home.
  - If you see pests in certain places, show your landlord and ask them to seal up cracks, holes, and hiding places.



Pest control takes TEAMWORK.
If you are doing your part, but the owner hasn't helped, call your local health authority and ask for a housing inspection.

The EPA says the best way to control pests is to:
Dry them out, Starve them out, and Keep them out!

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Public Health

Notice of Occupants' Legal Rights and Responsibilities

This document summarizes some of the legal options that you may have when the owner of a property you live in has not fixed certain problems in your home, as required by the state Housing Code (105 CMR 410.000). This is not legal advice. Talk to an attorney before you decide to withhold your rent or take other action described here.

Safe and Healthy Rental Housing:

Rental housing in Massachusetts must meet minimum standards to protect the health, safety, and well-being of occupants. The Housing Code, 105 CMR 410.000, *Minimum Standards of Fitness for Human Habitation* (*State Sanitary Code, Chapter II*), is the state regulation that sets these minimum standards. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health's Community Sanitation Program (CSP) issues this regulation, but the standards are enforced by local health departments.[1] CSP works with local health departments and the public to provide training and technical assistance about the Housing Code. For more information, please see mass.gov/lists/housing-community-sanitation.

Your Responsibility to Keep Your House Safe and Healthy

The Housing Code also has requirements that people living in rented homes or apartments need to meet. There are some problems like pests, mold, and keeping exits clear, that might need the owners and occupants to work together to fix the problem. For example, occupants need to make sure there is no food or garbage left out that could attract pests or keep their belongings out of exit hallways. If the local health department is doing an inspection, either by your request or for another issue, the local health department may tell you there is something that you need to fix. The local health department may issue you an order to correct and give you a certain amount of time to fix the problem.

Your Right to Safe and Healthy Housing and Protection from Retaliation

If you think that conditions in your home are unsafe or unsanitary and may violate the Housing Code, you should inform your landlord first. If your landlord does not adequately address these concerns, you should then contact your local health department. They will conduct free inspections of your home and will order your landlord to fix any violations of the Housing Code. You can find contact information for your local health department by calling your city or town hall or visiting their website. City/town websites are listed at: mass.gov/lists/massachusetts-city-and-town-websites.

Your landlord is not allowed to raise your rent or try to evict you just because you have made a complaint to them or to the local health department about the violations. This is called retaliation, and you may be able to sue the landlord for damages if this happens and you made your complaint in writing (M.G.L. c.186, s.18 and c.239, s.2A).

Your Right to a Hearing

You may ask for a hearing in front of your local Board of Health. You must do this in writing and within the timeframes below. If you send a written request on time to the local health department, a hearing will be held within 14 calendar days. **If you do not make a written request within the timeframes below, you lose the right to a hearing.** The chart below shows the reasons you may request a hearing, and the timeframe you have to send the request.

Reason You May Request a Hearing	Number of Days to Make the Request **in Writing**
Your home was not inspected by the local health department	**30 days** from the day you contacted health department
The inspector did not find violations you think exist	**30 days** from the last inspection by the health department
The inspector did not issue an order to correct violations	**30 days** from the last inspection by the health department
The inspector did not enforce the order to correct	**45 days** from when the owner received the order to correct

Within **five days** after the hearing, the local health department is required to issue a final decision on your complaint (105 CMR 410.840). If you do not agree with the decision, or at any point throughout the process, you can file an appeal in housing court.

[1] Depending on your city or town, this may also be called a Local Board of Health (BOH), Local Health Authority, or Inspectional Services Department. This is the local code enforcement authority responsible for enforcing the regulations.

May 2023 – revised November 2023

Key Take Aways

In Summary:

- Know the regulations or know where to find them
- Maintain a schedule for routine maintenance and annual inspections
  - This will help to identify potential concerns or violations BEFORE THEY BECOME ISSUES
  - Document your work
- Check in with occupants routinely and respond to their concerns
- If you receive an Order to Correct from the BOH, ensure repairs are made appropriately
- Pay attention, plan, and act before extreme weather events
- Weatherproof the properties when you can and when conducting routine maintenance and inspections of the property
  - Retain emergency supplies such as dehumidifiers and fans

Housing Code – Additional Resources

- The DHHL offers many additional resources such as guidance documents and translated materials

- These documents are listed below and may be found at: https://www.mass.gov/lists/housing#housing-regulations-

- Housing Regulations
- Memos
- Model Housing Correction and Inspection Forms
- Guidelines and More
- Occupants' Legal Rights and Responsibilities **
- Guidance to Control Excess Moisture and Mold – Occupant's Fact Sheet **
- Guidance to Control Excess Moisture and Mold – Owner's Fact Sheet
- Pest Control Guidance for Occupants **
- Pest Control Guidance for Owners
- Bed Bugs **
- Owner's Guide to Mold Clean-Up

**** Reflects documents that are available in multiple languages**

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

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Part 2
Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control

Jenna David, DHHL Director
Leyoneish Windross, Primary Prevention Planner

What We Do

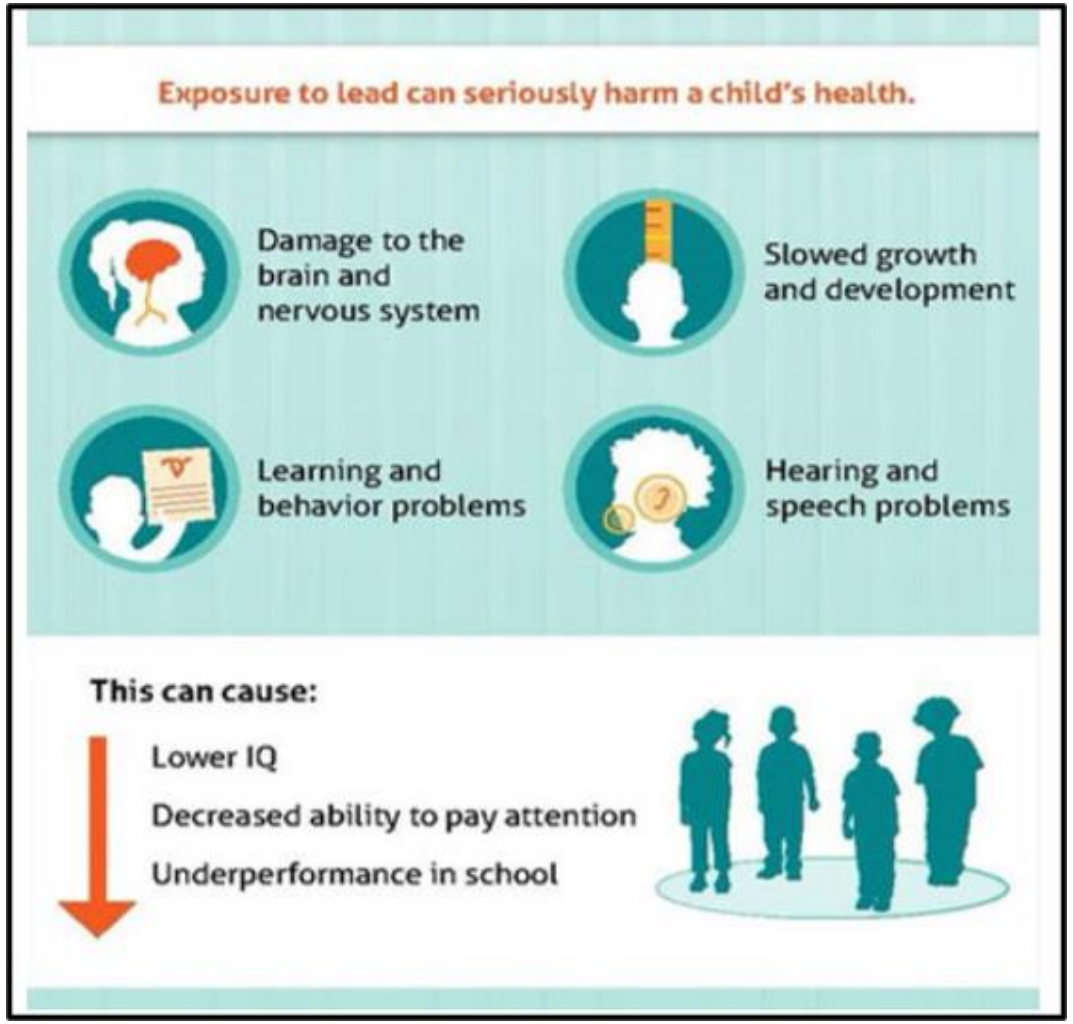


https://www.mass.gov/orgs/childhood-lead-poisoning-prevention-program

We help prevent, screen, diagnose, and treat childhood lead poisoning. We work to eliminate sources of poisoning through research and educational, epidemiological, clinical and environmental activities.

- Maintain surveillance and case management database
- License private and public lead inspectors
- Provide case management services (clinical, CHW, environmental)
- Investigate complaints
- Outreach/trainings

How Lead Affects Children



- Lead is a neurotoxin
- There is no safe lead level for children
- Young children are more vulnerable to the effects of lead because their bodies and brains are less developed
- There are often no signs or symptoms of lead exposure

How Children are Exposed to Lead

- Young children are most often exposed to lead from their home environment.
- Lead dust gets on hands and toys when children play and put their hands and toys in their mouths.
- Children can also breathe in lead during unsafe renovations.





Lead Law in Massachusetts

Massachusetts "Lead Law"



- One of the oldest and strongest in the U.S.
- Protects a child's right to a lead-safe home
- Requires the removal or control of lead paint hazards in **homes built before 1978** with **children under 6**
  - Rental & owner-occupied
  - Primarily preventative – compliance is required regardless of blood lead level
- Sets universal lead testing requirements
- Regulations defines blood lead **level or concern** & **lead poisoning**

Owners are strictly liable if property's not in compliance and a child is lead poisoned.

Lead Safe Homes and Tenant Notification

To comply with both the state and federal Tenant Notification requirements, the owner of a pre-1978 rental property must give the prospective tenant the following documents before entering a rental agreement: ***NEW FORMS NOW AVAILABLE***

1. Two copies of the Tenant Notification and Tenant Certification Form (one for the owner to keep and one for the tenant to keep)
2. A copy of the most recent lead inspection or risk assessment report for the rental unit, if one exists
3. A copy of any Letter of Compliance or Letter of Interim Control for the rental unit, if it exists

Owners and tenants should check **Lead Safe Homes** database to see if there is prior inspection history.

https://www.mass.gov/info-details/find-your-homes-lead-history
https://www.mass.gov/doc/tenant-lead-law-notification-form/download

How to Get a Letter of Compliance (LOC)

Step 1: Get home inspected

Have a licensed lead inspector check your home to identify any lead hazards and what needs to be repaired. If no hazards or unauthorized lead removal are found, the inspector will issue a Letter of Initial Compliance.

Step 2: Identify who's doing the work

If hazards are found, they need to be remediated. Low and moderate risk deleading can be done by the homeowner. Must receive authorization from CLPPP first.

For high risked deleading you must hire a licensed deleader or a lead-safe renovator.

Step 3: Notifying involved parties

If there are tenants living in the home, you must give notification 10 days before you delead. Also need to notify CLPPP, DLS, your Local Board of Health.

Conducting the Work



Step 4: Do the work

- For **low risk** deleading, occupants do not have to relocate but the work area must be clean by the end of the day.
- Occupants cannot be in the home during the process if it's **high/moderate** risk deleading.
- Must have a re-occupancy inspection by a lead inspector before occupants return.

Step 5: Final Re-inspection

- Once the work is completed, an inspector will need to come back to re-inspect the home. If the lead hazards have been corrected, the inspector will issue a **Letter of Full Deleading Compliance**

Understand a Unit's Lead Status

Acceptable Compliance documents:

- Letter of Initial Inspection Compliance
- Letter of Full Deleading Compliance
- Letter of Interim control–valid only ONE year from date of issuance–can be renewed only once (2 yrs max)
- Documentation of Environmental Status letter
- Unauthorized Deleading letter
- A Certificate of Maintained Compliance or Restored Compliance

Maintaining Compliance

- Once a property owner receives a letter of compliance, they are free from strict liability so long as the property is maintained.
- Property owners, especially rental property owners, should schedule visual checks of the compliance status of their property at least once a year.
  - If a property owner wants to update their letter of compliance, they should hire a lead inspector to do a Post Compliance Assessment Determination (PCAD).
  - Some housing subsidy programs require compliance letters be updated relatively frequently.

Lead-Safe (≠) Lead-Free

Connect with DPH

Contact the MDPH Division of Healthy Homes & Lead for

Questions and Guidance

Lead & Housing Code Hotline

(800) 532-9571

Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health

(617) 624-5757

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

DPH

Part 3
Financial Resources for Deleading (HUD Spotlight)

Eric Fortier
Program Manager, HUD Grant

Financial Assistance For Deleading

Parents / property owners should not wait for a child to be exposed to lead before deleading.

State and local funding resources are available:

- Get the Lead Out (statewide, loan program)

- HUD Lead Hazard Program (select cities)
  - Boston, Malden, Worcester, Brockton, Quincy & Weymouth, Lynn, New Bedford, Lawrence (**New** Chelsea, Greenfield, Haverhill, Springfield)

- Tax credit of $3,000 per unit

www.mass.gov/service-details/learn-about-financial-assistance-for-deleading

LeadSafe Massachusetts

Goals:

- **Reduce Childhood Lead Poisoning:** Prevent lead exposure in children by removing or controlling lead-based paint hazards in homes proactively.
- **Remediate Lead Hazards:** Fund the abatement of lead-based paint hazards in homes.
- **Target High- Risk Homes:** Focus on homes built before 1978- especially those occupied by families with children under the age of six.
- **Promote Healthy Housing:** Improve overall housing conditions by addressing environmental health hazards tied to lead.



LeadSafe Massachusetts

MA DPH was awarded $5 Million by HUD in December 2025 for lead abatement in 180 units plus $575,000 to make healthy homes related repairs in 75 of those units.

Available to most communities except for those that already have HUD Lead Hazard grants or are in the counties of Barnstable, Dukes, or Nantucket

We are accepting applications:
https://redcap.link/HUDLeadProgram

Scan QR Code

Interested in Applying or Learning More?

HUD Income Eligibility

FY 2025 State Income Limits

- Tenants applying are eligible with incomes at or below 50% or 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Priority is given to renters under the 50% threshold.
- Owner occupied units are eligible with incomes at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- **Income limits vary by region**.

Massachusetts

Median Family Income
$136,200

Very Low-Income Limit (VLIL) 50% of Median*							
1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5 Person	6 Person	7 Person	8 Person
$47,700	$54,500	$61,300	$68,100	$73,550	$79,000	$84,450	$89,900

Extremely Low-Income Limit (ELIL) 30% of Median*							
1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5 Person	6 Person	7 Person	8 Person
$28,600	$32,700	$36,800	$40,850	$44,150	$47,400	$50,700	$53,950

Low-Income Limit (LIL) 80% of Median*							
1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5 Person	6 Person	7 Person	8 Person
$72,950	$83,400	$93,800	$104,200	$112,550	$120,900	$129,250	$137,550

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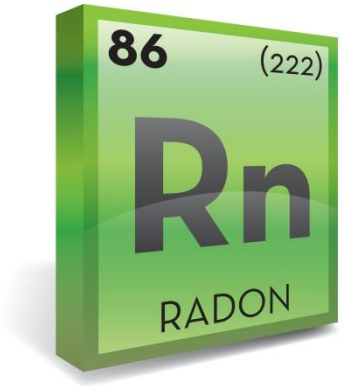
Part 4
Radon 101

Stefanie Santora
Senior Advisor for DHHL Assessment, Training, & Policy

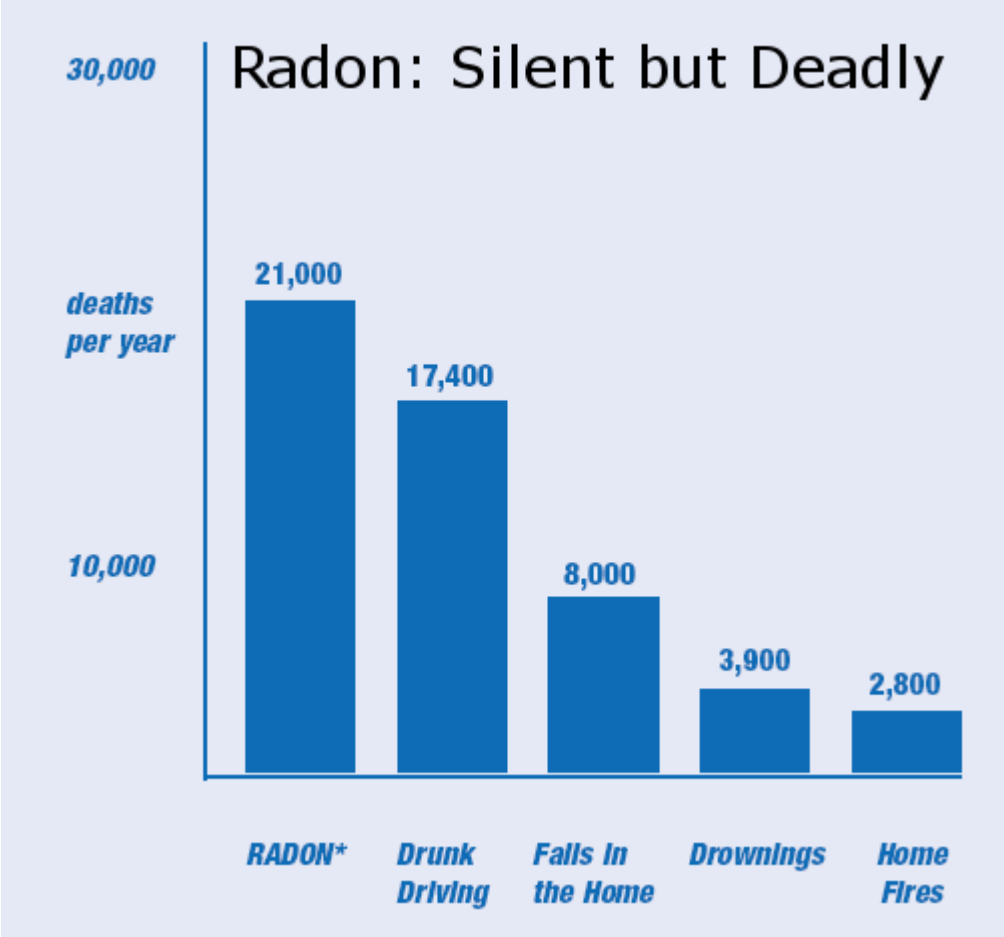
About Radon

Radon is a gas that is:

- Tasteless
- Odorless
- Colorless
- Naturally occurring
- **RADIOACTIVE**

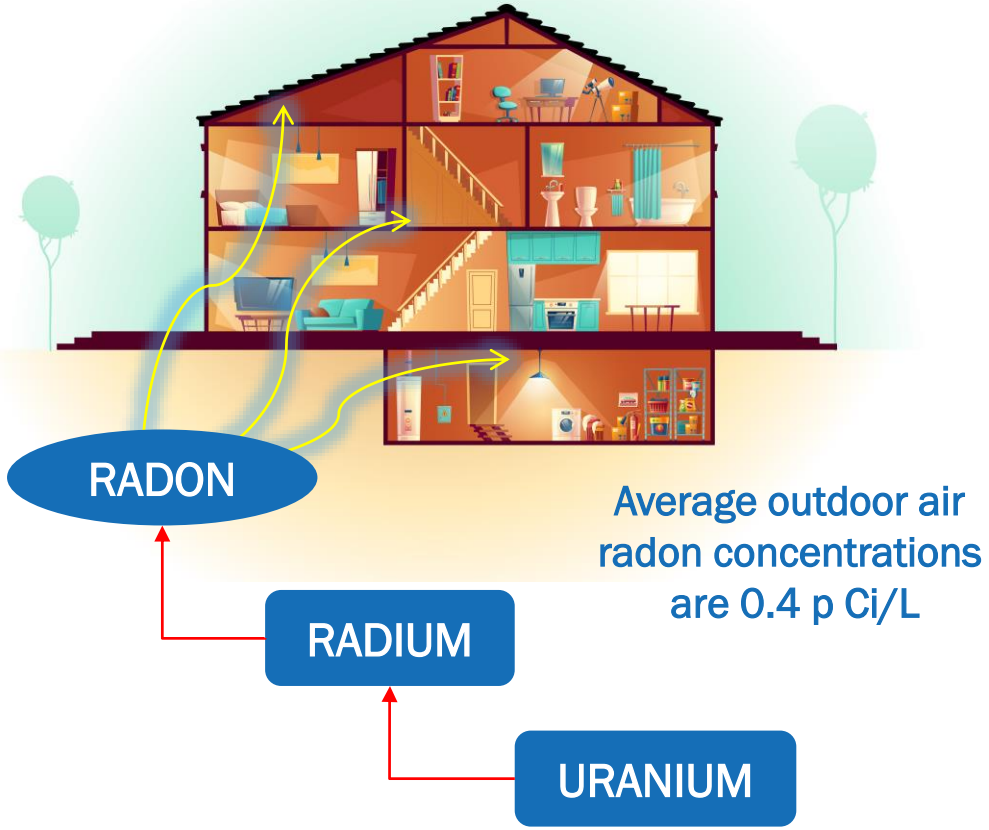


- Radon is a known carcinogen and can increase your risk of lung cancer.
- According to the EPA, radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and kills an estimated 21,000 Americans each year.



Radon in the Home

How Radon Enters a Home

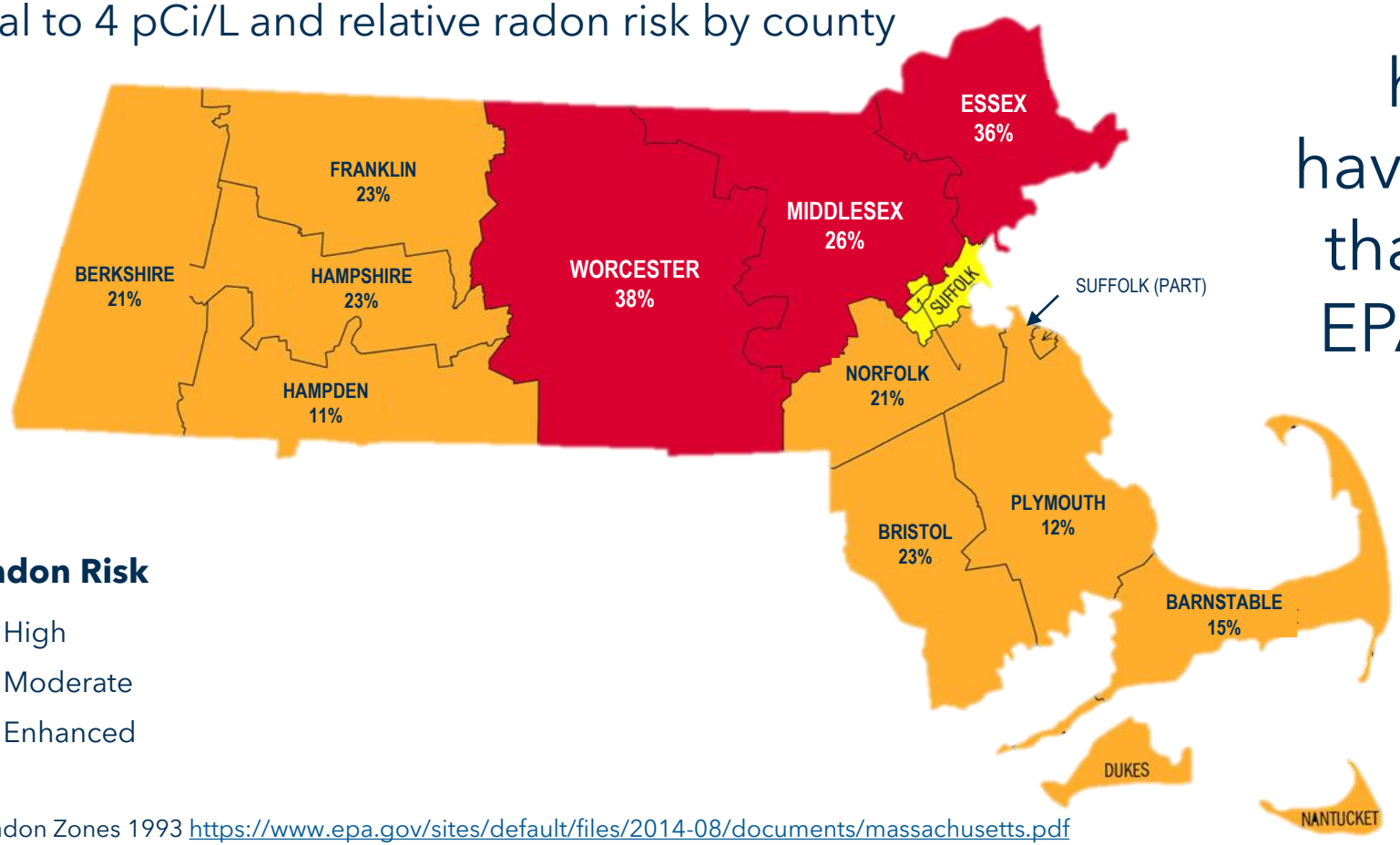


Action and Mitigation Levels for Radon in Indoor Air

- EPA Action Level: 4 pCi/L
- EPA also recommends that residents consider fixing their home for radon levels between 2 pCi/L and 4 pCi/L
- Target Radon Level is ***Less than 2 pCi/L***

Radon in Massachusetts

Distribution of homes with radon concentrations greater than or equal to 4 pCi/L and relative radon risk by county



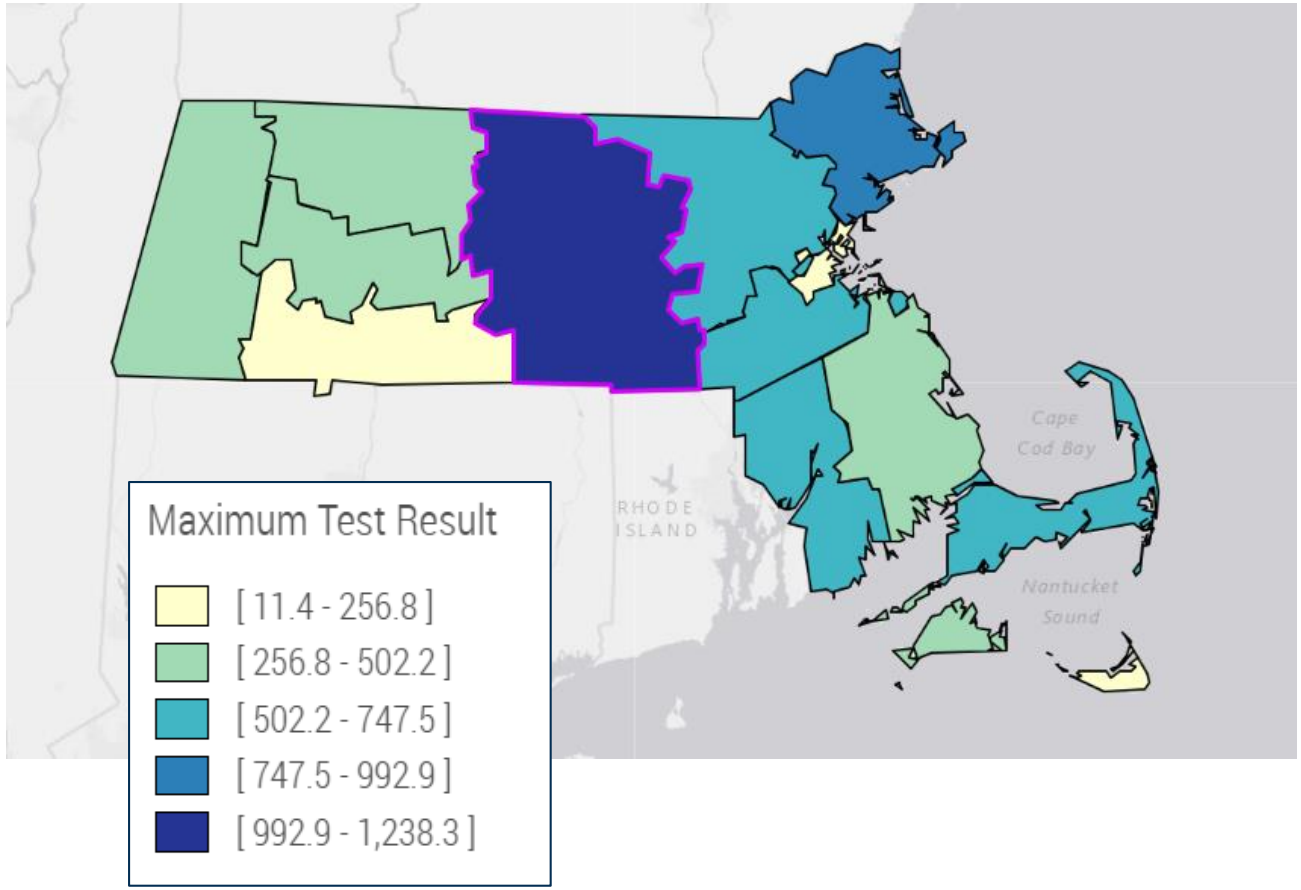
Relative Radon Risk

- Zone 1: High
- Zone 2: Moderate
- Zone 3: Enhanced

1 out of **4** homes may have radon levels that exceed the EPA action level

EPA's Map of Radon Zones 1993 https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2014-08/documents/massachusetts.pdf
Residential Radon Survey of 14 States https://aarst.org/proceedings/1988/1988_10_Residential_Radon_Survey_of_Fourteen_States.pdf

Radon in Worcester County



County	Worcester
Year in Report	2010 - 2021
Number of Tests	97,710
Average Test Result *	2.8
Median Test Result	2.7
Minimum Test Result	0.0
Maximum Test Result	1,065.1
% of Tests < 2 pCi/L	37.4
% of Tests ≥ 2 pCi/L	62.6
% of Tests ≥ 2 and < 4 pCi/L	26.9
% of Tests ≥ 4 pCi/L	35.7
Test Result per 1,000 Occupied Housing Units	299.2

https://matracking.ehs.state.ma.us/Environmental-Data/radon/index.html

Radon Testing & Mitigation

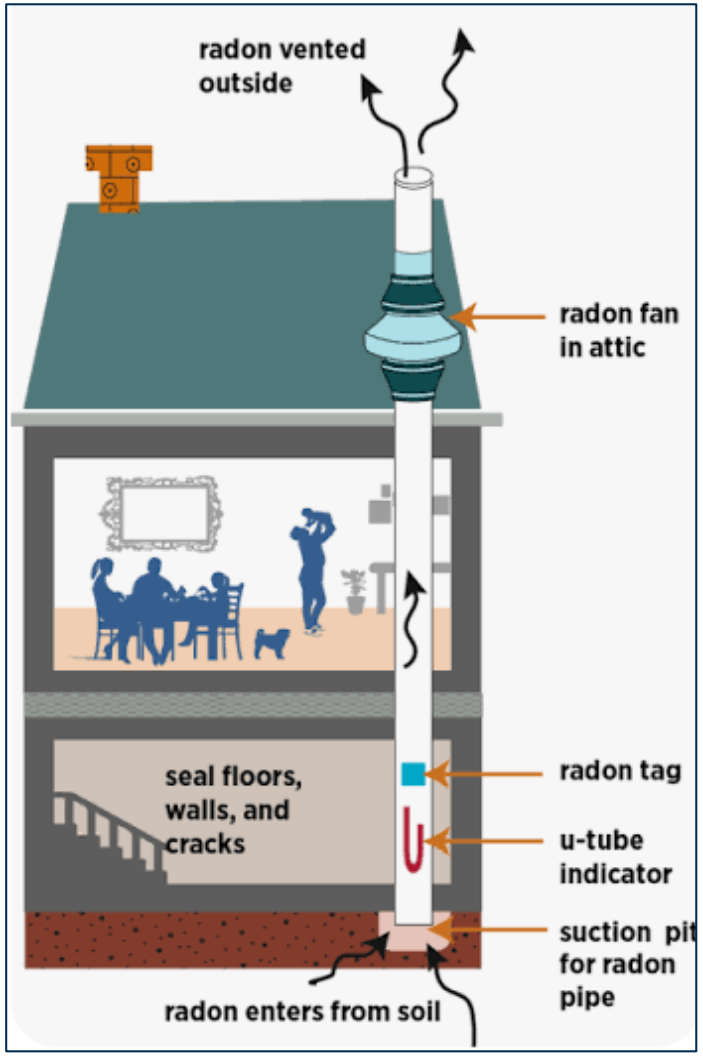
Radon Testing

- SIMPLE
- INEXPENSIVE
- FAST



Radon Mitigation

- Quick Install
- Average cost: $1500 - $2000
- Low Maintenance



Radon Testing in Air and Water

Contact the MDPH Radon Unit

Technical Guidance

Radon Information Line

800-723-6695

DPHIAQ.radon@mass.gov

Connect with DPH

@MassDPH

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

mass.gov/dph