



Patrick L. Casey
President

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Radon in Granite Countertops

Recent reports in the New York Times and elsewhere have set off a new wave of concern about radon; could it be emitted from granite countertops that have become so popular in America's kitchens? There have been more reports of 'hot' or potentially hazardous countertops, particularly among the more exotic and striated varieties from Brazil and Namibia."

Dr. John McCarthy, president of Environmental Health & Engineering, a public health consulting firm in suburban Boston states: "A considerable amount of research has been published in peer-reviewed scientific literature, and all of it comes to the same conclusion: the levels of radon emitted into the air from a granite countertop are not excessive and not showing any risk for the population in their homes."

The EPA's position is as follows: "It is possible for any granite sample to contain varying concentrations of uranium that can produce radon gas..." At this time, however, the EPA does not believe sufficient data exists to conclude that the types of granite commonly used in countertops are significantly increasing indoor radon levels. Some granite may emit gamma radiation above typical background levels. While radiation levels are not typically high, measurement of specific samples may reveal higher than expected levels on a case-by-case basis. A simple and inexpensive test is available for concerned homeowners to determine if elevated radon levels are being emitted from their granite.

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