



Source: Community Development - BSD

Agenda Item No: REP 161-13

To: City Council
From: City Manager and Staff

Council Meeting Date: Nov 18, 2013

Re: Radon Control in the City Building Code - Update

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At its regular meeting on September 16, 2013, the City Council approved the 2012 International Building Code and supplemental amendments. Council deferred discussion on "Appendix F" of the 2012 International Residential Code (IRC), entitled "Radon Control Methods," to provide the Building Construction Codes Commission (BCCC) an opportunity to review and comment on the radon regulations contained in the IRC.

DISCUSSION:

The Building Construction Codes Commission (BCCC) has completed its discussion of the Council's request for comments on Appendix F. The BCCC met on October 28, 2013 and the radon topic was on the commission's agenda. A letter from Fred Malicoat, Chair of the BCCC, stating their recommendation on the matter is attached for review.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

VISION IMPACT:

<http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/Council/Meetings/visionimpact.php>

9.3.3 Strategy: Enact regulations and adopt policies to implement better, more efficient technologies.

SUGGESTED COUNCIL ACTIONS:

The BCCC recommends that Appendix F of the 2012 International Building Code not be adopted until which time additional data shows that the average radon test in Boone County exceeds 4 pCi/L.

FISCAL and VISION NOTES:					
City Fiscal Impact Enter all that apply		Program Impact		Mandates	
City's current net FY cost	\$0.00	New Program/ Agency?	No	Federal or State mandated?	No
Amount of funds already appropriated	\$0.00	Duplicates/Expands an existing program?	No	Vision Implementation impact	
Amount of budget amendment needed	\$0.00	Fiscal Impact on any local political subdivision?	No	Enter all that apply: Refer to Web site	
Estimated 2 year net costs:		Resources Required		Vision Impact?	Yes
One Time	\$0.00	Requires add'l FTE Personnel?	No	Primary Vision, Strategy and/or Goal Item #	9.3.3
Operating/ Ongoing	\$0.00	Requires add'l facilities?	No	Secondary Vision, Strategy and/or Goal Item #	
		Requires add'l capital equipment?	No	Fiscal year implementation Task #	

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November 6, 2013

Council Members
City of Columbia
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Re: Radon Recommendation

Radon is a naturally occurring chemical element found in some soils. The accepted safe level in a building is less than 4 units of measure called picocuries per liter. The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services has determined that 25% of homes in Columbia have radon in excess of 4 picocuries/liter. The State's Department of Environmental Epidemiology's own data shows that Boone County has an average picocurie rating of 3.9, which is less than the EPA's recommended level for concern.

There are at least 2 possible methods of remediation. One is a passive system and the other is an active system. If the measurement of radon is low, a passive method is all that may be required, but if the level is higher a more aggressive, active system may be required. The passive system is a pipe from below the slab to above the roof. An active system has the addition of an electric blower.

The Building Construction Codes Commission feels that requiring any system without testing would be a penalty for the 75% of the homeowners that are not affected. Instead of requiring all new homes to have a system, we feel that all homes should be tested so the proper remediation method can take place. The test kits are available free of charge from the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services. Also, by requiring each home to have a passive system, this may instill a false sense of security for the homeowner. The passive system may not solve the radon issue and the homeowner would not know without a test. Therefore, we are recommending that each house be tested to determine the proper action. The Building Construction Codes Commission also recommends that efforts be directed at educating the 20-25% of its citizens that have a radon level above the EPA's recommended safe level on remediation options rather than needlessly forcing 75-80% of its citizens buying new homes to install a costly and unnecessary radon remediation system.

Sincerely,



Fred Malicoat
Chair, Building Construction Codes Commission
FM:spr