
◇ AROUND THE HOUSE ◇

WHAT IS RADON?

RADON IS A RADIOACTIVE GAS THAT OCCURS IN NATURE AS A RESULT OF THE RADIOACTIVE DECAY OF URANIUM.

WELL WATER THAT PASSES THROUGH THE UNDERGROUND AREAS CONTAINING URANIUM MAY BE ANOTHER IMPORTANT SOURCE OF RADON. EXPOSURE TO RADON INCREASES YOUR RISK OF DEVELOPING LUNG CANCER.

THERE IS CURRENTLY NO FEDERAL STANDARD FOR RADON IN WATER, HOWEVER THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH HAS A RECOMMENDED GUIDELINE OF 5,000 pCi/L IN PRIVATE WELL WATER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDELINE WITH NO STATUTORY OR REGULATORY AUTHORITY.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED BY CALLING THE CONNECTICUT RADON OFFICE AT (860) 509-7367 OR THE EPA HOTLINE AT (800) 426-4791.

WATER RECOVERY -VS- FLOW TEST

Water recovery gallons per minute or water flow gauge gallons per minute. Which test is a true recovery?

I've had people call my home inspection business and ask for a water recovery test. I always refer them to a licensed well person. I've also been told other home inspectors will do water recovery with what they call a water flow gauge.

Since I'm always interested in improving my services, I looked into a water flow gauge. The manufacturer is not clear whether this instrument will give the gallons per minute or only the measure of flow through the hose bibb at the time of the test. This started to sound like double talk to me, so to the person with no knowledge, this could easily sound like it

would work and not have to hire a licensed well person.

I was reading the March 2000 issue of the ASHI Report and saw an article by Rex Cauldwell, master plumber, about a different subject. He has written articles that have appeared in numerous publications, including the "Journal of Light Construction." He also gives seminars on plumbing and can be contacted via "Ask Rex" at: cornerhardware.com or directly via ltmtnele@yahoo.com. So I passed the question to Rex and this is the answer I received:

"A flow gauge tells you nothing except how fast the pump or tank pressure can send water to the house or out the hose bibb. If the gauge is being used at a hose bibb then it tells you zip.



Assuming that nothing is on in the house, the water at the bibb is a combination tank water and pump water, both being restricted by house piping. It tells you nothing about recovery.

If it is in series (cut the pipe at the tank and force all well water through the flow meter) then it will tell you how fast the pump can pump the water to the house in gpm at that specific moment. However, it will become less and less as the water is pulled down in the well. Again, it tells you nothing about recovery.

Here is the only practical seat-of-the-pants way to do a recharge test and even this is beyond the scope of the home inspector. First, measure the distance of the static water level to the casing top. Second, pump as much water out of the well as you can for a specific time, say 10 minutes, but the time is immaterial.



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Water Recovery vs. a Flow Test

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Then measure the static water level again. Let’s say it is 10 feet down, that’s 16 gallons missing from the well. In ten minutes measure the static water level again. If it came all the way back up you know that 16 gallons re-entered the well within the ten minutes. That’s 1.6 gpm recharge minimum.

Another way: measure static water level and then pump out as much water as practical for one minute. Measure the static water level again. Wait one minute and then recheck the static water level a third time—the amount of water that came back up in the well from that second reading is the minimum water recharge per minute.

If you want an accurate reading, you contact a well driller.

Bottom line: a flow meter does not measure recharge—period.”

To get an answer to your problem always go to a qualified person who is licensed.

You wouldn’t go to a doctor for legal advise, neither should you go to a home inspector for a water recovery test.