CITY OF ames INSPECTIONS

MEMO

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Sara Van Meeteren, Building Official

Date: September 30, 2026

Subject: Radon Requirements for Rental Properties

At the September 22, 2026 Council Meeting, the City Council reviewed a letter from Jessica Baker (attached) regarding elevated radon levels in the rental property that her daughter is living in. Direction from the City Council was to place the item on a future agenda.

As the letter stated, the Ames Rental Code does not regulate the testing or mitigation of radon in rental units. Additionally, there are no regulations for radon testing or mitigation in non-rental units through the Ames Municipal Code. There are no federal or state level requirements for radon testing.

Iowa City adopted an ordinance pertaining to radon mitigation in rental properties in 2021. This ordinance requires all single-family and duplex units to be tested for radon by a radon measurement specialist certified by the State of Iowa. The test results determine the next steps:

- If the test is less than 4 picoCurries per liter (pCi/L), the unit shall be retested in 8 years. If there is a habitable room in the basement it must be tested every 4 years.
- If the test is greater than 4 pCi/L, a radon mitigation system shall be installed and the unit tested within 90 days after installation. The system then requires testing every 8 years after installation.
- If the unit has an existing radon mitigation system, the unit shall be tested within 8 years of the date of the last radon test.
- Prior radon tests with a performance date in the last two years would be accepted.

A review of other states shows that the testing intervals vary from every two to every ten years. Additionally, most others do not exclude multi-family units from testing. Some require all units to be tested and others require, for example, only 25% of the ground floor units to be tested. Some states/jurisdictions not requiring testing require a disclosure of the most recent test to tenants prior to lease signing.

Fire Department
Inspections

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