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### **Younger and older respondents are less likely to have developed and practiced a home fire escape plan**

Less than one-fourth of Americans (23 percent) have both developed and rehearsed a home escape plan, according to a recent Harris Interactive survey conducted for the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Two-thirds of Americans (66 percent) say they have developed a home fire escape plan, but only a third of those (35 percent) say they have practiced it.

The telephone survey, of 1,014 adults, also found that as people grow older, they become more likely to develop an escape plan but less likely to practice the plan if they have it. The highest likelihood of developing and practicing an escape plan occurs during ages 25 to 54, when these two trends are best balanced.

- 20 percent of those aged 18 to 24 said they had developed and practiced an escape plan.
  - Only 53 percent said they had developed an escape plan
  - But fully 38 percent of those said they had practiced the plan
  
- 25 percent of those aged 25 to 54 said they had developed and practiced an escape plan.
  - 66 percent said they had developed an escape plan
  - And the percent of those who said they had practiced the plan was still a relatively high 37
  
- 20 percent of those aged 55 or older said they had developed and practiced an escape plan.
  - Fully 70 percent said they had developed an escape plan
  - But only 28 percent of those said they had practiced the plan

Respondents did not indicate why they had or had not developed or practiced an escape plan, but the age points where responses changed do correspond with some possibly related life changes. The youngest adults are much less likely to have a family and especially less likely to have school-age children who would be exposed to fire safety programs and the need to develop a home escape plan. Once adults are made aware of this need, the plans they develop could be good for as long as they inhabit the same home – well past the age when the children who inspired the planning have left the nest.

But practicing an escape plan can be physically challenging. Once the children have left the nest – much more likely for adults aged 55 and older – it may be harder to motivate oneself to do the work required to maintain skills and readiness to escape. This is unfortunate and ironic, because advancing age often brings a decline in speed and confidence of movement, which makes a well-rehearsed escape plan that will minimize delays and false starts all the more important.

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