



National Center for
Healthy Housing

Fact Sheet



Healthy Housing Key Findings 2009 Consumer Research Survey Fact Sheet

Included below is a summary of the findings from the 2009 NCHH survey that polled Americans (18 and older) to determine their level of awareness for common home health and safety risks and identify what steps, if any, they have taken to create and maintain a healthy and safe home.

Lack of Action to Create Healthy and Safe Homes

While the majority of survey respondents realize that the way a home is built and maintained can lead to serious health problems, including asthma or allergies (79 percent), lead poisoning (73 percent), injuries (65 percent) and cancer (47 percent), many have not taken steps needed to create a healthy and safe home environment for their loved ones:

- Just over two-thirds (68 percent) check their smoke alarm twice a year.
- Less than half (41 percent) have repaired water damage or plumbing leaks.
- Just 2 in 5 (38 percent) purchase non-toxic or “green” cleaning supplies.
- Just 1 in 3 (34 percent) have installed a carbon monoxide alarm.
- Less than 1 in 5 (18 percent) have installed child safety devices such as stair gates, cabinet locks, or window guards, if children live in or frequent the home.
- Just 1 in 10 (10 percent) have tested for radon.
- Just 1 in 10 (10 percent) have tested for lead-based paint, if the home was built before 1978.

Cash-strapped Families Forego Important Health and Safety Measures

When making home improvement decisions, a lack of financial resources often precludes families from taking steps to protect themselves. When asked which factors play an important role in deciding to make home improvements, respondents ranked the following most important:

- Two-thirds (66 percent) consider making their home more energy efficient important.
- More than half (53 percent) consider cost, such as cost of supplies or hiring a professional important.
- Nearly half (47 percent) consider improving the value of their home important.
- Less than half (41 percent) consider making the home healthier important.
- Just one-quarter (25 percent) consider making the home safer important.

Living with Health and Safety Risks

When asked to describe their current home, more than two-thirds of respondents (67 percent) admit that they live in a house with at least one major health risk:

- Nearly one-third (29 percent) do not have a carbon monoxide alarm.
- Nearly 1 in 5 (19 percent) permit smoking in the home.
- 17 percent report water leaks have been present in the last nine months.
- 15 percent report pesticides are used in the home, mold or mildew is present and pests such as mice or roaches have been present in the last three months.
- More than one in ten (11 percent) report that their homes were built before 1978 and the paint is peeling.

Nearly half (49 percent) of survey respondents report living with one or more of the following health and safety concerns at home:

- Extreme temperatures—feels too warm (24 percent) or too cold (19 percent)
- Pests like roaches or mice are present (14 percent)
- Mold growth (11 percent)
- Electrical problems such as power outages, flickering lights, or sockets that do not work (10 percent)
- Conditions in the home make allergies and/or asthma worse (10 percent)
- Damp or musty feeling (8 percent)

1. Which of the following health or safety measures have you taken in your current home? Please choose all that apply.

<i>Response</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
Checked the Smoke Alarm Twice a Year	680	68%*
Installed Energy-Efficient Lighting	629	63%
Repaired Water Damage or Plumbing Leaks	414	41%
Brought Non-Toxic or “Green” Cleaning Supplies	382	38%
Installed a carbon monoxide alarm	343	34%
Installed Water-Saving Fixtures	310	31%
Installed Child Safety Devices Such as Stair Gates, Cabinet Locks, or Window Guards, if Children Live in or Frequent the Home	182	18%
Tested for Lead-Based Paint, if the Home Was Built Before 1978	104	10%
Tested for Radon	98	10%
None of These	107	11%

2. If you haven't taken the health or safety measures in the previous question, which of the following best describes why? Please think about any home you have ever lived in.

<i>Response</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
I Didn't Have Enough Money	134	13%
I Didn't Own the Home	115	11%
It Wasn't a Priority for Me	67	7%
I Didn't Know What I Should Be Doing or How to Do it	51	5%
I Didn't Have Enough Time	10	1%
I Have Taken At Least One of the Health or Safety Measures in the Previous Question in at Least One Home I Have Lived In	628	62%

3. If you were making home improvements, which of the following factors would play an important role in your decisions? Please choose all that apply.

<i>Response</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
Making my Home More Energy-Efficient	665	66%
Cost, Such as the Price of Supplies or Hiring a Professional	529	53%
Improving My Home's Value	472	47%
Creating More Space or Making Better Use of My Current Space	439	44%
Making My Home Healthier, Such as Replacing Carpets with Smooth Flooring to Reduce Asthma or Allergy Triggers	410	41%
Making My Home Safer, Such as Installing Stair Gates, Cabinet Locks, or Window Guards	248	25%
Other	18	2%
None of These	72	7%

*All decimals are rounded to the nearest percentage point. This may result in certain numerical totals adding up to slightly more or slightly less than 100%

4. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following health problems can result from the way a home is built or maintained? Please choose all that apply.

<i>Response</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
Asthma or Allergies	796	79%
Lead Poisoning	733	73%
Injuries Such as Broken Bones, Burns or Poisonings	657	65%
Cancer	473	47%
None of These	97	10%

5. Which of the following describe your current home? Please choose all that apply.

<i>Response</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
No Carbon Monoxide Alarms	292	29%
Outside Air Enters the Home Through Leaks in the Windows, Doors, Holes or Cracks	285	28%
Smoking Is Permitted	195	19%
Water Leaks Have Been Present in the Last Nine Months	171	17%
Pesticides Are Used	154	15%
Mold or Mildew Is Present	154	15%
Pest Such as Roaches or Mice Have Been Present in the Last Three Months	147	15%
The Home Is Built Before 1978 and the Paint is Peeling	114	11%
No Smoke Alarms or Has Non-Working Smoke Alarms	63	6%
None of These	334	33%

6. Which of the following concerns, if any, do you have about your current home? Please choose all that apply.

<i>Response</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
It Sometimes Feels Too Warm	237	24%
It Sometimes Feels Too Cold	191	19%
It Has Pests Such as Mice or Cockroaches	136	14%
It Has Mold Growth	108	11%
It Has Electrical Problems Such as Power Outages, Flickering Lights, or Sockets That Don't Work	105	10%
It Worsens My Allergies or Asthma or the Allergies or Asthma of Other Members of My Household	103	10%
It Feels Damp or Musty	78	8%
None of These	510	51%

Survey Methodology

The NCHH Survey was conducted by Kelton Research between July 22nd and July 29th, 2009, using an email invitation and an online survey. Quotas are set to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total U.S. population ages 18 and over.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results.

In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

Sample = 1,005 Nationally Representative Americans Ages 18 And Over