

# RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS 2012 RECIDIVISM STUDY

Planning & Research Unit

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## Introduction

This report explores the recidivism rates for prisoners released from the Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC) during calendar year 2012 (CY12). Data is compared against previously reported recidivism data.

### Definition of a Recidivist:

- ⇒ An offender who was released from a sentence at RIDOC, and
- ⇒ Who returned to RIDOC as a sentenced inmate, or
- ⇒ Who returned to RIDOC as an awaiting trial inmate as noted.

### The Release Cohort

There were 3,029 sentenced offenders released in CY12, accounting for 3,365 distinct release events. The majority of offenders were white (56%), males (88%), and averaged 34 years of age upon release. Based on the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R), an empirically supported risk-need assessment used by RIDOC, inmates' average score was 28, indicating a moderate risk for men to reoffend and a high risk for women.

Nearly three quarters of those released had served for a nonviolent (43%) or violent crime (31%).

The average sentence length imposed by RI courts was 1.6 years while the median length of stay for a released offender was 3 months. As a result of the relatively short sentences, the most common manner of release was expiration of sentence (85%). Offenders were released from all facilities, including Home Confinement. Minimum Security alone accounted for almost one third (31%) of releases.



RIDOC's Maximum Security cell block

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*“The mission of the RIDOC is to contribute to public safety by maintaining a balanced correctional system of institutional and community programs that provide a range of control and rehabilitative options for criminal offenders.”*

*- RIDOC Mission Statement*

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### Summary of Findings

- 52% of releases returned to sentence status within 36 months of release; 34% in year 1, 47% by year 2, and 52% by the close of year 3.
- On average, males recidivated at higher rates than females (54% vs. 39%).
- Correlates of recidivism were found with education, age at release, custody level, and LSI-R Score
- Of those released, 60% returned as awaiting trial recidivists within 3 years.

# Sentenced Readmissions

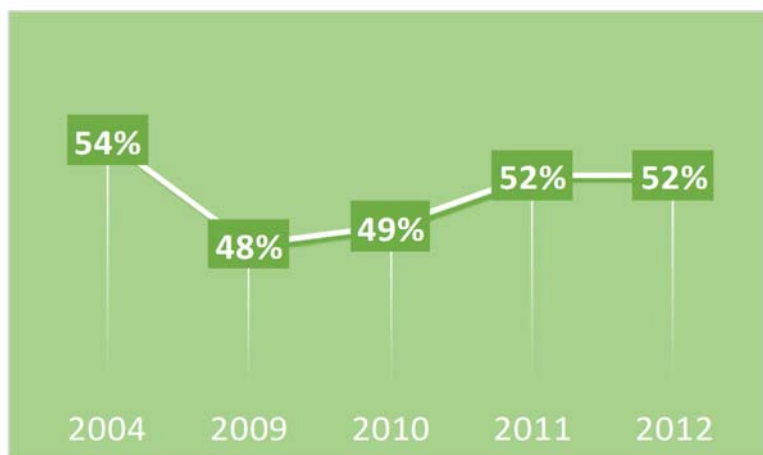
At 3-years post-release, 52% of offenders had returned to RIDOC with a new sentence. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of females and 54% of males were recommitted as sentenced inmates.

Virtually all offenders who returned were for a new sentence (50%) or for a probation violation (41%). Parole violators accounted for only 9% of recidivists. The majority of parole violators returned for a technical violation (71%) while the majority of probation violators returned with new charges (73%).

In general, offenders returned for the same type of crime from which they were released. Violent offenders tended to come back for violent crimes, drug offenders returned for another drug charge, etc.

## Compared to Earlier Cohorts

The number of releases and the recidivism rate has fluctuated cohort year to cohort year. The 2004 cohort had the highest return rate to-date (54%) yet the lowest number of releases to track (3,324). The 2009 cohort had the lowest return rate (48%) yet the most releases to track (3,699). The current cohort (CY12) has a return rate of 52% within 36 months of release.



A significant trend to note is the difference in probation violator commitments between the cohorts. Probation violator recidivists dropped by nearly half from 2004 to 2009. Since then, a steady increase is apparent. In 2012, these types of commitments reached nearly the same level as the CY04 cohort.

## Female Recidivists

Literature suggests incarcerated women are critically different than men in certain areas like crime type, substance abuse problems, psychiatric disorders, single parenthood, etc. (Bloom & Covington, 1998)

In RI, women tend to be older upon release with a median age of 36 as opposed to men's (age 31). They are subject to lower security levels at the ACI and tend to serve for non-violent and drug offenses.

Women spend slightly more time in the community before re-offending.

None of the female releases with an LSI-R score indicating low risk level recidivated.

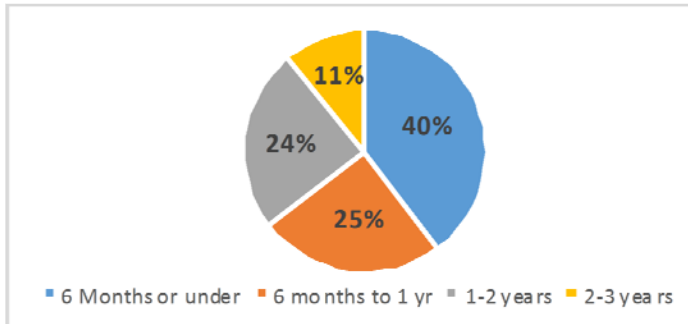
Overall, 39% of women reoffend and come back to the ACI as a sentenced inmate within 36 months of release. Of those, one third are for probation violations and 58% for nonviolent offenses.

51% of women returned as awaiting trial detainees within 3 years.

RIDOC has adopted the Women's Risk Need Assessment (WRNA) to use in conjunction with the LSI-R, for better management of female offenders.

## Time in the Community

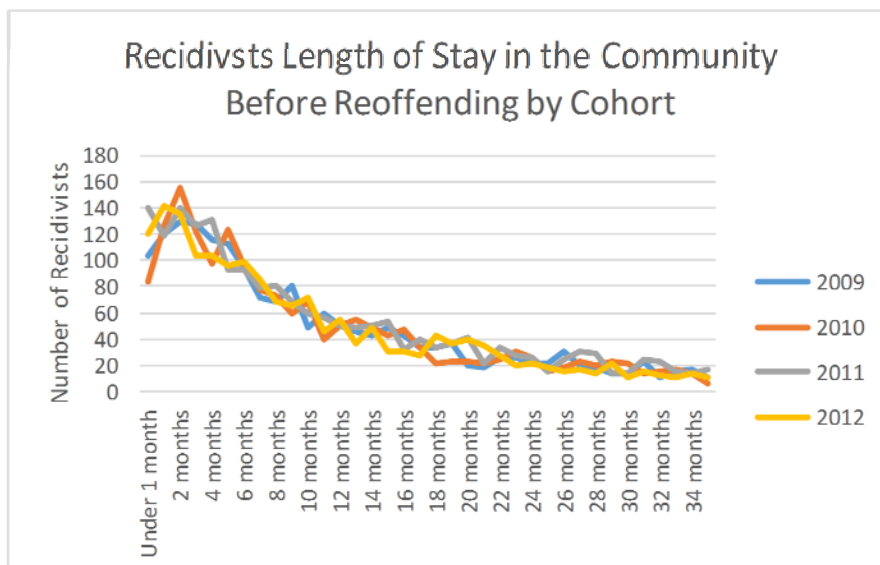
The average time spent in the community for the CY12 cohort was 10.3 months. Almost 7% of recidivists returned within 30 days of release. An additional 22% returned between 1 and 3 months post release. By 6 months post-release, 46% of recidivists already returned to RIDOC.



Although more offenders returned in the first few months post release in the CY11 and CY12 cohorts, the overall trend remains the same as visualized in the chart below.

Parole violators recidivated faster than any other commitment type, 5.7 months on average, while probation violators and those who were newly sentenced returned in about 11 months.

Offenders with children spent more time in the community before re-offending. Those released from serving a less serious type of offense (i.e. nonviolent) returned sooner than more serious offenses (i.e. violent). Lower LSI-R scores indicated longer time in the community.



## Awaiting Trial Readmissions

RIDOC operates a unified correctional system, meaning all pre-trial detainees and sentenced offenders (regardless of sentence length or crime type) are under the department's jurisdiction. Unlike most departments, this gives RIDOC the unique opportunity to report rates for those who returned to await trial.

Thirty-nine percent (39%) of releases returned within 1 year as awaiting trial detainees, 53% within 2 years, and 60% by the third year.

Of the women released in 2012, 51% returned to await trial within 36 months of release while 61% of men returned in the same time period.

The majority of awaiting trial detainees were committed as probation violators (43%) or for failure to appear in court (33%).

Two-thirds of awaiting trial recidivists (66%) were held without bail while additional 30% were held on surety bail. Surety bail allows for detainees to post 10% of the total bail to gain release.

# Correlates of Readmissions

The following variables were significantly correlated to recommitment rates: LSI-R score, offender education level, age at release, and custody level at release.

## The Level of Service Inventory-Revised

About a decade ago, RIDOC began using the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) to assess offenders in order to address individual risks and needs through 10 domains: criminal history, education/employment, financial, family/marital, accommodation, leisure/recreation, companions, alcohol/drug, emotional/personal, and attitudes/orientation. The LSI-R score had a strong, positive correlation to recidivism; the higher the LSI-R score, the more likely an offender is to recidivate.

Within the domains, criminal history had the strongest correlation followed by family/marital, alcohol/drugs, and companions.

LSI-R Risk Level	% Recidivated	% Did Not Recidivate
Low	28.8%	71.2%
Low/Moderate	56.6%	43.4%
Moderate	68.8%	31.2%
Medium/High	79.4%	20.6%
High	72.2%	27.8%

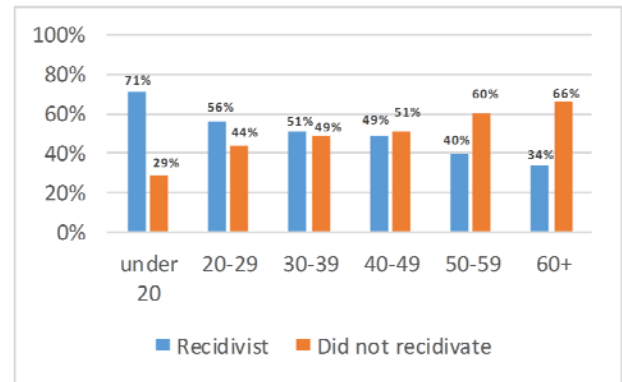
Of those who were released with an LSI-R risk level of low, about 29% recidivated within the three-year follow-up period as compared to 72% of those who scored high.

## Education Level

Offenders with at least some college were almost 14% less likely to recidivate than those who had a high school diploma or did not attain a high school diploma.

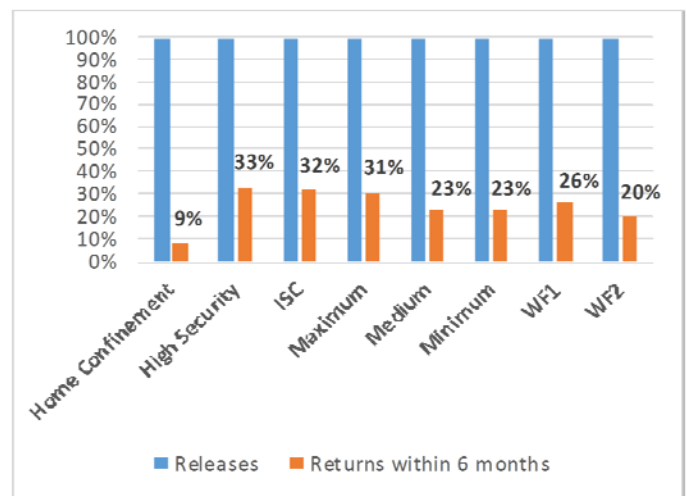
## Age at Release

For those under age 29 at release, recidivism rates were significantly higher than older offenders.



## Custody Level

Offenders, regardless of time served, were more likely to return if they were released from a maximum security facility versus minimum or community-based security.



Security level was also correlated with time in the community. Those offenders serving in higher security facilities (i.e. High Security, Intake Service Center, and Maximum Security) stayed in the community for shorter times. For example, one third of those released from High Security recidivated within 6 months of release while only 9% of those released from Home Confinement returned in the same time period.