

Rhode Island Department of Corrections

Director Ashbel T. Wall, II

Planning & Research Unit

2009 Recidivism Study: Three-year Follow Up

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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 2009 (CY09). Data is compared against previously reported recidivism data for a 2004 release group.

Definition of a Recidivist:

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

The Release Cohort

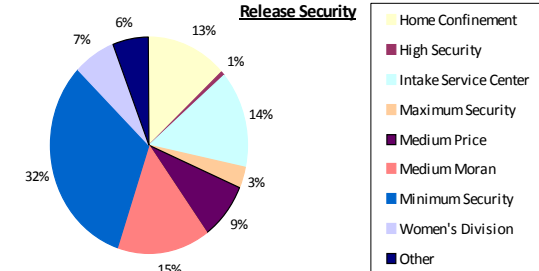
There were 3,387 sentenced offenders released in CY09, accounting for 3,699 distinct release events. The majority of offenders released were white (54%), males (90%), and averaged 34 years of age at the time of release.

Nearly two-thirds of those released had served time for a nonviolent (38%) or drug-related crime (24%).

The median length of stay for released offenders was 4.7 months. As a result of the relatively short sentences, the most common manner of release was expiration of sentence (80%). Offenders were released from all facilities, as well as Home Confinement. Minimum Security alone accounted for almost one third of releases (32%).

Table I: 2009 Release Security

Release Security



Summary of Findings

-Of the release cohort, a total of 31% returned to sentence within 1 year, 42% by 2 years, and 48% within 3 years of release. This is 6% lower than the 2004 cohort; 32% within 1 year, 46% within 2 years, and 54% by the third year mark.

-39% of female offenders and 49% of male offenders recidivated within 3 years of release.

-Sex offenders recidivated at a lower rate than the entire release cohort; 43% vs. 48% respectively.

-For recidivists returned to awaiting trial status, 37% returned as awaiting trial detainees within 1 year, 50% by 2 years, and 56% by 3. 2004 rates were higher; 44% by year 1, 58% by year 2, and 64% by the third year mark.

Sentenced Readmissions

At 3-years post release, 48% of offenders had returned to RIDOC with a new sentence. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of females and forty-nine percent (49%) of males were recommitted as sentenced inmates within 3 years.

Compared to the 2004 RIDOC recidivism study, rates have dropped 6%. The 2004 study reported 54% of released offenders returned to sentenced status within 3 years of release.

The majority of released offenders had probation following release. Over one-third (35%) of the

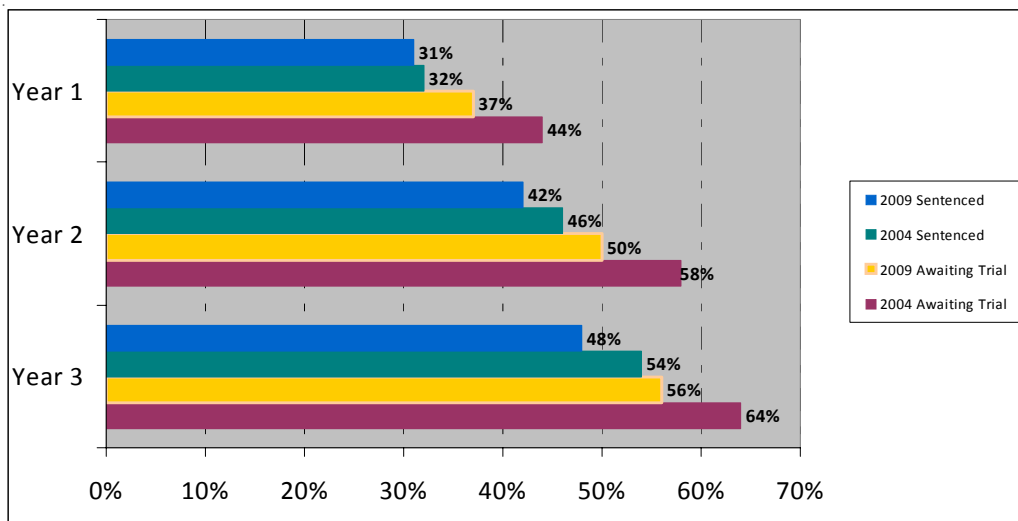
sentenced commitments are for probation violations (81% new charge, 17% technical, 2% undetermined).

Awaiting Trial Readmissions

Thirty-seven percent (37%) of releases returned within 1 year as awaiting trial detainees, 50% within 2 years, and 56% by the third year. These rates are lower than those of the 2004 study: 44% within 1 year, 58% by 2 years, and 64% by 3.

Of the women released in 2009, 46% returned to await trial within three years. Almost 58% of released men

Table II: 2009 & 2004 Recidivism Rates



How does RI compare to other unified systems?

RIDOC operates a unified correctional system, meaning that all pretrial detainees and all sentenced offenders (regardless of sentence length or crime) are under the jurisdiction of the Department. Five other states in our country operate unified systems; Maine, Hawaii, Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, and Vermont.

Alaska

An Alaskan Judicial Council report from 2007 cited a 55% overall re-conviction rate within 3 years of release.

Hawaii

Hawaii reports a re-conviction rate of 57.3% within two years of release as of 2001.

Connecticut

In 2008, The Connecticut Dept. of Corrections reported 50% of offenders returned to prison with a new sentence within 5 years.

Maine

The Maine Statistical Analysis Center published a 58.1% overall re-incarceration rate in 2009.

Delaware

A 2009 Delaware study reported a 67.3% 3 year re-commitment rate.

Vermont

In 2011, The Council of State Governments, Justice Center published a report on Vermont recidivism and noted a 52% re-conviction rate within 3 years.

returned to await trial in the same time period. This is a decrease compared to the 2004 recidivism study, where 61% of released women and 65% of released men returned as awaiting trial detainees within three years.

Sex Offenders

For sex offender readmissions, 43% recidivated within 3 years. Most (60%) of the released sex offenders were admitted as parole or probation violators. All of the 18 sex offenders who returned with new charges were for sex crimes.

Thirty-nine percent (39%) of sex offenders were admitted as pre-trial detainees 3 years post-release.

Prison v Jail Rates

Since RIDOC operates a unified correctional system, in order to compare RIDOC's population to other jurisdictions, "jail" offenders are defined as those serving 1 year or less and "prisoners" are those offenders serving greater than 1 year.

Forty-eight percent (48%) of "jail" and "prison" offenders recidivated within 36 months of release.

For the 1,222 "prison" offenders, 32% returned to serve another prison term of more than 1 year within 36 months of release, while 19% returned to serve a "jail" sentence of less than 1 year.

For the 2,477 "jail" offenders, 56% returned to serve another term of less

than 1 year within 36 months of release. Twenty-three percent (23%) of offenders who were released from a "jail" sentence recidivated within 2 years and came back to serve a prison sentence of more than 1 year.

Finally, comparable recidivism rates between inmates released from "jail" or "prison" were not statistically significant, suggesting that the type of sentence (i.e., jail vs prison) did not bear upon an inmate's likelihood to reoffend.

Time in the Community

The average time spent in the community prior to re-offending and returning to sentenced status was approximately 11 months. The vertical solid black line in Table III indicates the 9 month mark of the studies. At this point almost 56% of recidivists from the 2009 cohort had returned to a new sentence.

Female recidivists returned to a sentence over a month sooner than their male counterparts. Female were in the community an average of 9.8 months while males averaged almost 11 months before recidivating. Sex offenders averaged an even longer stay in the community before re-offending at about 12 months post-release.

The 2004 study indicated that offenders averaged a longer stay in the community before reoffending. Female recidivists were in the community about 11 months while males were able to stay in the community almost 12 months. Similar to the 2009 cohort, 51% of all recidivists had returned to sentence status within the first 9 months of the study. Table III is a comparison between the 2 release cohorts and how long recidivists were able to remain in the community before re-offending.

Table III: 2004 and 2009 Sentence Recidivsts Length of Stay in the Community Before Re-offending

