

OPM - Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division

Recidivism in CT, 2008 releases

Highlights

- During 2008, 16,286 men and women were released or discharged from CT DOC custody. Within the next three years:
 - 64% had been re-arrested,
 - 54% had been readmitted to prison for at least one day,
 - 51% had been convicted for a new offense, and
 - 37% had been returned to prison to begin a new term of incarceration.
- Recidivism rates among ex-offenders have been relatively stable in recent years. Among offenders released or discharged in 2004, 2005 and 2008, about 37% were sentenced to new prison terms within 3 years.
- Most offenders who return to prison do not return for violent crimes. Approximately 50% of offenders, who were released from prison in 2008 and subsequently arrested and charged with a felony, within a year of release, were charged for drug offenses.
- The state lacks solid, empirical information on the circumstances of most offenders once they leave prison. As a result, state policymakers are unable to speak with certainty about the factors driving persistent recidivism rates in the state. Although significant resources are expended on re-entry, the failure to collect critical information on offenders once they leave prison makes it almost impossible to measure the quality and effectiveness of state-funded prisoner re-entry initiatives.

How is recidivism measured?

The Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division (CJPPD) at OPM regularly collects and analyzes criminal justice data on offenders in the state's prison system.

In this analysis, CJPPD has calculated three-year recidivism rates for 16,286 sentenced offenders who were released or discharged from DOC custody during 2008. The data was supplied by the

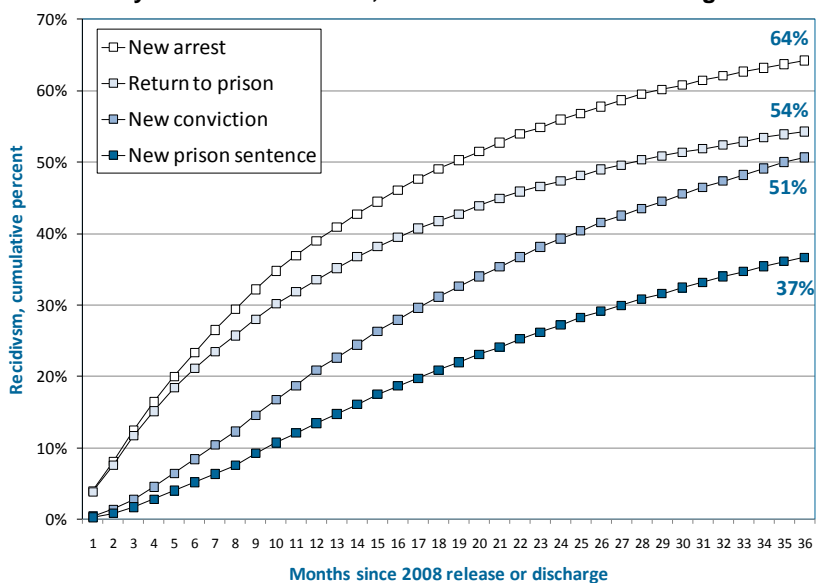
Department of Correction (DOC) and the Judicial Branch's Court Support Services Division (CSSD). Four separate measures of recidivism are presented: 1) new arrests 2) any return to prison 3) new convictions, and 4) returns to prison to begin a new sentence.

Recidivism rates, prisoners released in 2008

	Time since 2008 release or discharge			
	Six months	One year	Two years	Three years
New arrest	23%	39%	56%	64%
Return to prison	21%	34%	47%	54%
New conviction	8%	21%	39%	51%
New sentence	5%	13%	27%	37%

In several respects, 2008 was a landmark year for criminal justice policy in Connecticut. In the aftermath of a brutal and sensational triple-murder in Cheshire, Governor Jodie Rell suspended parole releases in 2007. Within months, the prison count swelled by almost 1,000 inmates. By February 1, 2008, the prison population reached 19,894, its historic high. Later in the year, new legislation strengthened penalties for certain crimes, restructured the state's parole Board, and boosted investment in efforts to improve data gathering and information sharing among criminal justice agencies. For most of 2008, the DOC labored to house and process a backlog of offenders who in other circumstances would likely have been released to parole.

Three-year recidivism rates, inmates released or discharged in 2008



Who recidivates and why?

The answer to the first part of this question is relatively straightforward. Existing data allows us to identify offenders who have recidivated. We know, for example, which offenders have been rearrested and which have not. We know who has returned to prison and who hasn't. For those who have returned, we know when they returned, what they were charged with, their legal status and the manner in which they returned. We know their ages, genders and ethnicities. We also know their criminal histories and their institutional histories. In fact, we have enough of this data so that we can predict, with good accuracy, which groups of offenders present the highest risk of recidivism and how long it will take them to return.

What the available data cannot provide, however, is the answer to why large numbers of former prisoners keep returning to the system. Connecticut collects no comprehensive, reliable data on the actual conditions and circumstances of the people who leave prison. We know, for example, precious little about the employment experience of most ex-prisoners. We also lack good aggregate information on the extent and stability of family and social support, income, health or housing. Although we anticipate that 54% of prisoners will return to prison within three years, there are few resources committed to understanding why. When a former prisoner returns to the criminal justice system, there is generally no one to assess why. These offenders are simply processed again, beginning the cycle anew. In 2008, 16,286 sentenced offenders were released from DOC custody. Over 75% of these individuals had already completed a prior sentence at the DOC.

There is no single or easy fix to the problem of persistent recidivism. Although access to jobs, drug treatment programs, workforce development, decent housing and healthcare assistance are critical, our current lack of information about the day-to-day circumstances of our ex-prisoners, and about the performance of various existing re-entry initiatives means that we cannot adequately measure the impact and efficacy of existing programs in reducing recidivism.

To date, the state has made good progress with respect to information sharing and technology. Unfortunately, much of the data we have cannot answer why large numbers of ex-offenders recidivate. Without the ability to generate better, more complete, post-incarceration information, it will remain a challenge for state policy makers to craft more effective approaches to reduce recidivism over the long term.

Recidivism and gender

Male offenders, regardless of the measure used, recidivate at higher rates than female offenders. Within three years of release, 38% of men who were released in 2008 were behind bars serving a new sentence. Among women offenders, only 24% had been returned to prison to begin a new sentence.

1. Recidivism rates, by gender, 2008 cohort

	Men	Women	Total
Offenders	14420	1866	16286
New arrest - rate			
12 month	39.8%	32.7%	39.0%
24 month	57.1%	47.4%	56.0%
36 month	65.1%	57.4%	64.2%
Return to prison - rate			
12 month	34.6%	25.0%	33.5%
24 month	48.8%	35.8%	47.3%
36 month	56.0%	41.2%	54.3%
New conviction - rate			
12 month	21.3%	18.3%	20.9%
24 month	40.2%	32.1%	39.3%
36 month	51.7%	42.2%	50.7%
New prison sentence - rate			
12 month	13.9%	10.1%	13.5%
24 month	28.4%	17.7%	27.2%
36 month	38.3%	24.2%	36.7%

Recidivism and age

Young male offenders exhibit higher recidivism rates than older offenders. Within three years of release, 77% of male offenders under the age of 24 had been rearrested; 64% were returned to prison. Among men over the age of 43, 53% had been rearrested and 46% had been re-incarcerated.

2. Recidivism rates by age quintile, men

	Younger than 24	24 to 28	29 to 35	36 to 43	44 and Older
Offenders	2911	2768	2843	2928	2970
New arrest - rate					
12 month	50.2%	40.6%	36.7%	39.7%	32.0%
36 month	76.9%	68.0%	64.4%	63.8%	53.0%
Return to prison - rate					
12 month	41.3%	35.1%	33.2%	35.5%	28.1%
36 month	64.4%	57.5%	55.5%	56.9%	45.9%
New conviction - rate					
12 month	24.4%	21.0%	19.5%	23.0%	18.5%
36 month	61.8%	53.9%	50.3%	51.2%	41.9%
New prison sentence - rate					
12 month	15.7%	12.4%	12.8%	15.2%	13.2%
36 month	47.0%	38.9%	36.2%	38.1%	31.2%

Among women who were released from prison, the picture was different. Unlike their male counterparts, younger female offenders did not exhibit uniformly higher recidivism rates. While the women in the

youngest age quintile had the highest recidivism rates for new arrests and convictions, women in the middle quintiles exhibited higher recidivism rates for reincarceration and new prison sentences.

The significant differences observed in the patterns of recidivism among men and women in CT, highlights how important it is to avoid the temptation to conflate female recidivism rates with the overall rates.

3. Recidivism rates by age quintile, women

	Younger than 25	26 to 32	33 to 39	40 to 45	46 and Older
Offenders	349	371	401	398	347
New arrest - rate					
12 month	36.1%	37.5%	34.2%	30.7%	24.8%
36 month	66.2%	62.0%	60.8%	54.3%	43.2%
Return to prison - rate					
12 month	22.3%	27.2%	27.9%	26.6%	20.2%
36 month	38.7%	43.9%	44.9%	44.5%	32.6%
New conviction - rate					
12 month	16.3%	21.3%	19.2%	18.1%	16.4%
36 month	47.9%	43.4%	45.9%	39.9%	33.7%
New prison sentence - rate					
12 month	8.9%	13.2%	10.2%	10.6%	7.2%
36 month	23.8%	27.2%	26.9%	25.4%	17.0%

(Note: Female population quintiles skewed older than the quintiles for males.)

History of incarceration

The number of prison sentences an offender has already served at the DOC is strongly correlated with the likelihood of recidivism. Among offenders released in 2008, only 3,393 (23%) were completing their first prison sentence. A larger number of released offenders, (3,845) were completing at least their 6th sentence.

4. Recidivism rates by sentence history, males

	First sentence	2nd or 3rd	4th to 6th	Over 6 sentences
Offenders	3393	3994	3178	3845
New arrest - rate				
12 month	27.8%	36.8%	42.1%	51.7%
36 month	49.0%	61.8%	69.0%	79.7%
Return to prison - rate				
12 month	20.9%	32.2%	37.0%	47.3%
36 month	37.2%	52.5%	61.6%	71.6%
New conviction - rate				
12 month	12.7%	18.9%	21.6%	30.9%
36 month	35.2%	47.8%	55.8%	67.2%
New prison sentence - rate				
12 month	7.8%	12.2%	13.6%	21.2%
36 month	24.0%	35.1%	41.1%	51.8%

One offender in the 2008 cohort, a 50-year old man, had served a total of 92 sentences with the DOC before his 2008 release. This individual was the most accomplished recidivist in the cohort. He was first

admitted to prison as an 18-year old pre-trial detainee in 1976, and between that admission and his release in 2008, he was readmitted a total of 218 times.

By 2008, this offender had been sentenced to 92 terms of incarceration on 114 separate criminal charges including 36 for breach of peace, 30 for disorderly conduct, 9 petty larcenies, and 9 counts of misdemeanor criminal mischief. The offender also served time for 6 felonies including assault on a police or fire officer (3), assault 2 (1), burglary 3 (1) and reckless burning (1). His longest sentence was two years. His last sentence, was for breach of peace. Since his 2008 release, this offender had been jailed several more times, all for misdemeanor charges.

In 2008, the offender was assessed, by the DOC, to have a serious substance abuse problem requiring intensive residential or out-patient treatment. Although an outlier in the cohort, this offender represents a category of prisoner that regularly cycles through the state's criminal justice system. Despite high recidivism rates, very few of these offenders appear to pose a serious threat to public safety.

Recidivism among parolees

During 2008, 1,547 offenders were released to supervised parole.¹ This group's movements were tracked for the three years subsequent to release.

The analysis revealed that most parolees (57%) completed the terms of their supervision and discharged their sentences while in the community within three years; 124 (14%) of these offenders transitioned to special parole supervision. Of the 880 parolees who successfully completed parole, 33% found themselves back in prison within 3 years

5. First subsequent movement after parole

Next move type	All parolees	Percent
Ended sentence on parole	880	56.9%
Technical violation	353	22.8%
Criminal violation	200	12.9%
Absconded	48	3.1%
Time out program	31	2.0%
Sent to other jurisdiction	13	0.8%
Died	12	0.8%
No change	10	0.6%
Total	1547	100.0%

Six hundred and one parolees (39%) were returned to prison for 1) technical violations 2) criminal violations,

¹ In 2005, 2,522 offenders were release to parole in CT. The reduced 2008 figure reflects the impact of the Cheshire murders on the state's criminal justice system.

or 3) absconding. Only 10 parolees remained on parole at the end of 36 months.

Of the 353 offenders who returned to prison for technical violations: fifty percent (50%) discharged the remainder of their sentences in prison; nine percent (9%) discharged to special parole. Only twenty-nine percent (29%) of technical violators were reparaed; nine percent (9%) received a new prison sentence after being remanded to prison.

End-of-sentence discharges

During 2008, 7,628 offenders, about 47% of all offenders leaving DOC facilities had completed their sentences (EOS). There have been long-standing concerns in the state about the wisdom of releasing offenders directly from prison without some transitional period of community-based supervision. It is widely assumed that prisoners who are released to community supervision do much better, i.e., have lower recidivism rates, than offenders who have no post-incarceration supervision. Unfortunately, this assumption, at least in Connecticut, is not adequately supported by a preponderance of evidence.

The lack of evidence, however, does not mean that community supervision programs are ineffective at reducing recidivism. On the contrary, it is reasonable to expect that most offenders will perform significantly better if they have some form of post-incarceration support and supervision as they transition back to their lives after prison. Without better information and further study, we simply can't quantify any positive effect.

The 7,628 offenders that discharged from prison at the end of their sentences (EOS) in 2008 were not a homogeneous group. Many of these prisoners were low-risk offenders that were completing relatively short prison sentences. In fact, the sentences they served were often so short that many offenders could not have been reasonably placed in community-based programs in the time available.

6. Time served by EOS discharges, 2008

Time between last DOC admit and EOS discharge	EOS offenders, 2008	Percent
1 month	1584	20.8%
2 or 3 months	1468	19.2%
4 to 6 months	1581	20.7%
7 to 12 months	1578	20.7%
Over 12 months	1417	18.6%
Total	7,628	100.0%

At the other end of the spectrum was a smaller group of high-risk, more-violent offenders, many of whom were not eligible for parole until they had served 85% of their sentences. Significant numbers of these offenders discharged from prison because they either

1) waived parole 2) were denied parole, or 3) could not be placed with appropriate sponsors or into residential programs.

Between these two poles, there was a third pool of offenders that were not released to parole, transitional supervision (TS) or halfway houses because they presented, either, too much risk, lacked sponsors, had not completed required programming, or had extensive disciplinary problems while incarcerated. The EOS population also consists of a significant number of offenders who had been remanded to prison after violating the terms of their DOC community supervision.

The following tables illustrate some of the problems that can be encountered trying to evaluate recidivism through the prism of offender-release types. Table 7 compares the recidivism rates of different streams of offenders who returned to prison within three years of their 2008 release or discharge. In the table, offenders who discharged (EOS) returned to prison at lower rates than offenders who were released to halfway houses, parole or transitional supervision. From the chart, it would appear that offenders who discharge at EOS have the lowest rates of recidivism.

7. Return-to-prison by first-2008 release type, men

First 2008 release/discharge	Men	Within 12 months	12 month rate	Within 36 months	36 month rate
Halfway houses	1,744	789	45%	1192	68%
Release to parole	1,055	437	41%	651	62%
Release to TS	3,144	1214	39%	1874	60%
Discharge (EOS)	6,616	2125	32%	3550	54%
All male offenders	14,420	4991	35%	8072	56%

Table 8, however, looks at recidivism among the same offenders but, in this case, by convictions. Based on new conviction data, offenders who discharged EOS had recidivism rates that were on-par or higher than rates for offenders who were released to community supervision programs.

8. New convictions by release type, men

First 2008 release/discharge	Men	Within 12 months	12 month rate	Within 36 months	36 month rate
Halfway houses	1,744	307	18%	912	52%
Release to parole	1,055	181	17%	514	49%
Release to TS	3,144	668	21%	1,767	56%
Discharge (EOS)	6,616	1,637	25%	3,511	53%
All male offenders	14,420	3,065	21%	7,462	52%

This apparent contradiction is easily explained when we consider that various pathways exist for offenders returning to prison. In Table 7, EOS offenders could only return to prison because of new criminal offenses. Meanwhile, offenders under community supervision could be returned to prison for a new offenses and for a range of technical violations related to their conditions of supervision.

The added ability to be returned to prison for technical violations explains virtually the entire difference in recidivism rates in both tables.

In Table 8, offenders who discharged EOS exhibited much higher new conviction rates within 12 months of discharge than offenders under community supervision. Although differences in these rates closed over time, the first 12 months are generally the period when most troublesome offenders on supervision are remanded. The difference in recidivism rates, in year one, may reflect the possible prophylactic effect that community supervision can have on crime, i.e., some offenders are returned to prison for technical violations before they actually commit new crimes.

When the length-of-incarceration among EOS offenders was considered, there was little evidence to indicate that the length of an offender's incarceration played a significant role in recidivism (See Table 9). In this analysis, we calculated length of incarceration from the date of the offender's last prison admission to the date of their 2008 discharge. In this way, any time the offender may have spent in pre-trial detention was included in the calculation.

9. Recidivism and length-of-incarceration

	0 to 6 months	6 months to 1 year	1 year to 3 years	More than 3 years
New arrest rate				
12 month	46.3%	48.2%	45.5%	32.3%
24 month	60.1%	62.7%	61.6%	45.0%
36 month	66.4%	70.3%	67.3%	55.4%
New conviction rate				
12 month	26.7%	26.0%	23.0%	13.9%
24 month	43.7%	47.1%	45.5%	30.3%
36 month	52.9%	57.2%	56.3%	40.2%
Return to prison rate				
12 month	38.1%	34.4%	32.9%	27.9%
24 month	49.5%	51.9%	49.4%	41.4%
36 month	55.1%	59.1%	56.0%	49.8%
New sentence rate				
12 month	18.4%	15.8%	14.2%	10.8%
24 month	31.6%	33.5%	34.0%	27.9%
36 month	39.7%	44.5%	43.7%	38.2%
Offenders	4633	1578	1166	251

Table 9 indicates that offenders who discharged EOS after serving the longest terms of incarceration (over 3 years) had the lowest rates of recidivism. Offenders who were incarcerated for periods of less than three years, regardless of length, exhibited remarkably similar rates.

Since 2009, the DOC has used a risk instrument that was developed in-house called TPAI. The TPAI has been useful, helping DOC to distinguish between offenders who pose a low risk of recidivating from those who pose a high risk. The TPAI assigns a

score, on a 10-point scale, that is calculated from a number of factors that have been shown to predict recidivism. The following table examines the relationship between the length-of-incarceration for male offenders who discharged EOS in 2008 and their TPAI score at discharge.

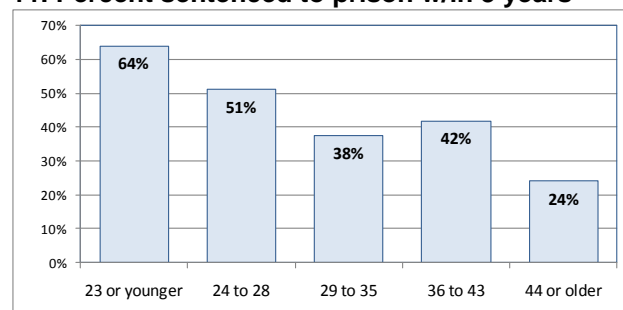
10. Recidivism risk & time-of-incarceration, men

TPAI GROUP	0 to 6 months	6 months to 1 year	1 year to 3 years	More than 3 years
Low risk, <5	34.5%	15.0%	9.8%	18.0%
Med low, 5 or 6	32.3%	30.7%	30.5%	20.1%
Med high, 7	17.8%	25.6%	25.8%	22.1%
High, 8 to 10	15.4%	28.7%	33.9%	39.8%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Scored offenders (m)	4017	1450	1071	244

The group with the lowest recidivism rates (see Table 9) served the most time (over 3 years) and yet, they had the highest percentage of offenders with high TPAI scores. These findings are paradoxical and warrant more investigation.

Closer inspection of the offender group that had served three or more years in prison revealed that 82% of the men with the lowest risk scores were 50 or older. Among the high risk men; only 20% were that old. Within three years of release, sixty-four percent (64%) of offenders under the age of 24, who had previously served three years in prison, were back in behind bars, sentenced for new offenses. This rate was two-and-a-half time higher than the rate for offenders who were 44 or older. These findings are consistent with other findings that show youth to be a strong predictor of recidivism.

11. Percent sentenced to prison w/in 3 years



Another take on recidivism

In 2014, Court Support Services Division (CSSD) in the Judicial Branch completed a recidivism study of offenders who were released or discharged from prison in 2004 (*OPM published an analysis of this same cohort in 2008*). The CSSD study, performed for the Results First Initiative, was an attempt to apply cost-benefit-analysis modeling to the state's criminal justice system.

Unlike OPM's recidivism studies which generally focus on recidivism based on an offender's first return to the system, the CSSD study tracked offenders for seven years and considered all subsequent returns to the criminal justice system. The CSSD study followed a cohort of 13,649 offenders and found that in the 7 years after they were released, 74% had been convicted for new crimes. OPM's study found that approximately 56% had been convicted for new offenses within 3 years.

By considering all subsequent recidivism events, CSSD was able to determine that, in the seven years after they were released, the 10,079 offenders who recidivated accumulated a total 31,449 convictions for new criminal offenses.

Offenders and probation

Unlike parolees, who remain under DOC jurisdiction, probationers are supervised by the Judicial Branch. In 2008, 39.3% of male offenders were sentenced to serve a term of probation after completing their prison sentences.

When offenders violate the terms of their probation, they are often incarcerated. In fact, the DOC regularly reports Violation of Probation (VOP) as the most common controlling offense associated with its population of sentenced prisoners. Although CSSD has done much to reduce violation rates in recent years, among offenders released or discharged in 2008, 51% had, at some point prior to their release, been incarcerated for VOP.

Offenders that were sentenced to probation after prison had much better outcomes than offenders who were released without probation. The reason may have to do with 1) the quality of supervision, and 2) the risk profiles of different groups of offenders leaving prison each year.

12. Recidivism among probationers, males

	Probation to follow?		Total
	No	Yes	
Male offenders			
Total	8,758	5,652	14,410
New arrests			
12 month rate	45.3%	31.4%	39.8%
24 month rate	63.5%	47.2%	57.1%
36 month rate	71.2%	55.7%	65.1%
New Conviction			
12 month rate	25%	15%	21%
24 month rate	46%	31%	40%
36 month rate	58%	42%	52%

The following table differentiates male offenders who left prison in 2008 by their TPAI scores. Through this lens we see that offenders who had been sentenced

to probation, generally, had lower TPAI scores when compared to other offenders.

13. TPAI scoring and male probationers

TPAI score	No probation	Probation	All males
Low risk, <5	14.2%	35.6%	22.6%
Med. Risk	32.7%	33.2%	32.9%
High risk, >6	53.1%	31.2%	44.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

While it is not entirely clear why the average risk score of offenders sentenced to probation was lower than scores for those not given probation, it certainly helps to explain the lower rates of recidivism among probationers. In recent years, the courts have increasingly opted to sentence what they consider troublesome offenders to special parole instead of probation. The data may reflect this.

TPAI risk scores and recidivism

For several years, CT DOC has assigned a risk-score called the TPAI (Treatment Programming and Assessment Instrument) to offenders in its custody. This weighted score reflects the offender's 1) age at their first DOC admission 2) the total number of sentences served with the DOC 3) gender 4) current age 5) convictions for violent offenses, and 6) a history of violating of community supervision. The TPAI was validated using data for 32,000 offenders released from state prisons in 2004 and 2005.

14. One-year recidivism rates and TPAI scores

	TPAI scores, males, 2008 cohort									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Males	167	446	1046	1600	2097	2648	3140	2241	890	140
1-year rates										
Rearrest	6%	13%	14%	24%	32%	42%	50%	52%	58%	66%
Return to prison	2%	9%	9%	15%	27%	37%	44%	50%	54%	59%
New conviction	2%	6%	6%	11%	15%	22%	28%	31%	32%	38%
New sentence	0%	1%	2%	5%	9%	15%	19%	20%	22%	29%

New crimes after release

Thirty-nine percent (39%) of offenders who were released or discharged from prison in 2008 were rearrested and charged with a new offense within one year. Of the 6,352 offenders who were arrested, 52% were charged with a felony.

Of all felony charges that were filed during that first year, 49.3% were class 'U' felonies, which are, generally speaking, the least serious felony charges. On further inspection, 91% of the "U" felonies were for drug-related charges. Another 8% were for weapons-related offenses. The following tables

contain information on the charges that were filed against the 6,352 offenders that were arrested within a year of release or discharge.

15. New felony arrest charges, crime class

Class of felony	Charges	Percent
A	81	0.9%
B	530	5.7%
C	1226	13.1%
D	2907	31.1%
U	4605	49.3%
Total	9349	100.0%

Only one-in-five felony charges filed in the first year after release involved any degree of violence or significant coercion. Drug charges, again, were the most common felony offenses against these offenders.

16. New felony arrest charges, crime type

Type of felony	Charges	Percent
Drug related	4230	45.2%
Violence	1995	21.3%
Theft/fraud	1017	10.9%
Public order	980	10.5%
Weapons-related	636	6.8%
Other	491	5.3%
Total	9349	100.0%

Although 39% of all prisoners released in 2008 were rearrested within a year, only a very small percentage of these offenders were charged with violent offenses. In fact, less than one-in-five of these offenders (1,131) were charged for a class-A, class-B or class-C felony. If only serious felony charges were considered in our calculations, the one year felony re-arrest rate would fall from 39% to 6%.

Table 17 contains data on the most common types of felony charges, by felony class, filed against offenders who were discharged or released in 2008. The table reports the number of charges filed, not the number offenders.

Out of 16,286 offenders in the 2008 release cohort, only 314 (2.1%) were charged with either a class-A or class-B felony within 12 months of release.

Forty-one (41) offenders were charged with 81 class-A felonies (See Table 17). Of these 41 offenders, only 21 were subsequently convicted for the class 'A' felonies they were charged with at arrest.

17. Most common felony charges at arrest

Three most comon arrest charges by felony class	Statute	Charges filed	% of class
Total class 'A' felony charges		81	
MURDER	53a-54a	25	31%
KIDNAP 1	53a-92	16	20%
HOME INVASION	PA08-01(a)(1)	13	16%
Total class 'B' felony charges		530	
ROBBERY 1	53a-134	186	35%
LARCENY 1	53a-122	132	25%
ASSAULT 1	53a-59	52	10%
Total class 'C' felony charges		1226	
RISK OF INJURY	53-21	299	24%
ESCAPE 1	53a-169	292	24%
LARCENY 2	53a-123	212	17%
Total class 'D' felony charges		2907	
BURGLARY 3	53a-103	519	18%
FLR TO APPEAR 1	53a-172	440	15%
LARCENY 3	53a-124	389	13%
Total class 'U' felony charges		4605	
POSS NARCOTICS	21a-279(a)	1329	29%
DRGS NR PRHB PL	21a-278a(b)	677	15%
DRGS NR PRHB PL	21a-279(d)	594	13%

Recidivism and DRs

The behavior of offenders incarcerated in Connecticut prisons is governed by the Code of Penal Discipline (DOC Administrative Directive 9.5). The Code defines unacceptable inmate conduct, outlines procedures to adjudicate infractions and establishes limits on the sanctions that may be imposed on inmates for violations of the Code.

Offenders cited for infractions of the Penal Code are issued a disciplinary report (DR). The most serious offenses - including assaults, fights and flagrant disobedience - are defined as Class-A. Class-B and Class-C offenses are less serious. During 2012, the DOC staff issued 15,544 disciplinary reports, about 45% were Class A.

Would it be reasonable to expect that offenders who exhibit chronic disciplinary problems while incarcerated might pose a higher risk of recidivism once they were released from prison? The data indicates that misbehavior in prison and the likelihood of returning to the criminal justice system are closely related.

Offenders who had been issued a Class-A DR in the 12 months prior to release or discharge had significantly higher return rates compared to offenders with no serious disciplinary issues.

18. Class-A DRs w/in 12 mos. of release

	All	No DRs	1 DR	2 DRs	3 or more
Male offenders	14,420	10,503	2,255	841	821
New arrests					
12 month rate	40%	36%	47%	54%	60%
24 month rate	57%	52%	67%	73%	76%
36 month rate	65%	60%	75%	81%	83%
Return to prison					
12 month rate	35%	30%	41%	51%	52%
24 month rate	49%	44%	58%	67%	70%
36 month rate	56%	51%	65%	74%	75%
New Sentence					
12 month rate	14%	12%	16%	18%	23%
24 month rate	28%	25%	33%	38%	48%
36 month rate	38%	34%	45%	52%	60%

The relationship between poor discipline and recidivism was even stronger among inmates who received Class-A DRs within 6 months of release or discharge.

Recidivism and early release

In October 2011, the CT DOC implemented Risk Reduction Earned Credit (RREC). Under this initiative, a majority of prisoners were eligible to earn 5 days of credit, towards the completion of their prison sentences, for each month they had been incarcerated. Prisoners were required to meet the programming requirements of their Offender Accountability Plans and maintain a good disciplinary record to be awarded time off their sentences.

In March 2013, OPM performed a recidivism analysis of the first 3,279 offenders who had been discharged with at least one day of RREC credit. Because return-to-prison rates are more reliable than new conviction or new sentence rates during the first year, data on offender returns-to-prison were used to calculate one-year recidivism rates for these offenders. The rates were then compared to cohorts of offenders released in 2005 and 2008.

The study found that offenders who earned RREC credit returned to prison at a significantly lower rate than offenders released in either 2005 or 2008 during the year following release. Further inspection of the data revealed that the discrepancy could almost entirely be explained away by a reduction in the number of offenders returning to prison for violating the conditions of their DOC-community supervision. This same phenomena had already been discussed in the section on EOS discharge (See pages 4 and 5).

19. 12-month return-to-prison rates

Months since release	RREC cohort, cum %	2008 cohort, cum %	2005 cohort, cum %
1	2%	4%	3%
2	4%	8%	7%
3	7%	12%	11%
4	9%	15%	14%
5	11%	18%	18%
6	13%	21%	21%
7	16%	24%	24%
8	18%	26%	26%
9	20%	28%	28%
10	23%	30%	30%
11	25%	32%	32%
12	26%	34%	34%
Offenders	3,279	16,286	16,241

When return-to-prison rates were calculated to exclude remands for technical offenses, recidivism rates between the 2005, 2008 and RREC cohorts closed considerably.

Thinking about recidivism

Some of these findings may help to sharpen our thinking about the meaning and usefulness of recidivism rates. Offenders who may appear most likely to return to prison are not necessarily the same offenders who pose the greatest risk to public safety. Everyone would agree that one ex-offender committing a serious violent crime is much worse than fifty ex-offenders being charged for one hundred relatively minor, victimless crimes.

The Research Unit at the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division at OPM, works throughout the year seeking to develop a better, more pragmatic understanding recidivism and the states offender population.

This report was produced by the Research Unit in the Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division at the **Connecticut Office of Policy and Management**.
450 Capitol Avenue
Hartford CT, 06106

Mike Lawlor, Under-Secretary
Ivan Kuzyk – Principal author

Parts of this report were written in 2013 and 2014; many of the findings have been reported previously at various criminal justice venues across the state. The report is being published now, in 2015, in order to provide readers with this information in a single, accessible place. It is available on-line at the OPM-CJPPD website. All questions, comments and suggestions should be directed to the Research Unit at CJPPD.