



## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

# RECIDIVISM REPORT: INMATES RELEASED FROM FLORIDA PRISONS

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## Executive Summary

This document reports general and standard recidivism rates and shows how certain offender characteristics and other factors affect these rates. This information provides context for any use of recidivism rates as performance measures for the Department of Corrections.

### Cautions Regarding Use

- These rates should not be compared with rates previously published because more offense data is now available than was previously.
- The rates reported provide descriptive information; they are not the results of an evaluation of the Department of Corrections, its activities, or its programs.

### Methodology

- **New:** An advanced statistical technique (survival analysis) is used to calculate rates, allowing more recent release data to be included, providing short and long term rates.
- **New:** Advanced statistical techniques are used to establish how much certain factors influence reoffense rates (logistic regression) and to specify the relative contribution of a factor while controlling for other factors' influence (proportional hazards regression).
- **New:** Arrest data supplied by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement are used to calculate additional recidivism rates based on rearrest as opposed to reoffense (i.e., reconviction).
- All available and appropriate offense data maintained by the Department are used to calculate reoffense rates.

- All available prison releases with a minimum 75 percent chance of capturing a subsequent offense are included, regardless of how long or short the current follow-up period after release is.
- Only releases from original prison commitments are used; releases following technical violation returns are not included to avoid inflating “successful” releases.

### **General Recidivism (Reoffense) Rates** *Updated*

The inmate reoffense rate is the percentage of inmates released since July 1993 who return to the Department for a new offense committed within a certain time following their release:

6 mo.	14.1%	18 mo.	29.3%	36 mo.	40.2%	60 mo.	46.8%
12 mo.	23.1%	24 mo.	33.8%	48 mo.	44.3%	72 mo.	48.6%

### **Standard Recidivism (Reoffense) Rates**

The department uses two years from prison release as the standard follow-up period.

- Two years allows enough time for rates to become stable, reliable measurements.
- Longer-term rates are less likely to reflect true effects of incarceration on recidivism.

### **Latest Rates** *Updated*

- A **general standard rate** of 33.8% is calculated from all releases since July 1993.
- The **latest standard rate** of 34.7% is calculated from releases in Fiscal Year 1996-97, the most recent annual release cohort that has a full 24-month follow-up period.

### **Rates by Year Released**

- **Updated:** Recidivism (reoffense or rearrest) rates do not vary much for inmates released during different fiscal years (e.g., 2-year reoffense rate— high: 36.6% for FY95-96 releases, low: 34.1% for FY 97-98 releases).
- No clear upward or downward trend in rates appears for inmates released during each of the last six fiscal years.
- **Rates may have limited value as performance measures** of progress on a year-to-year basis, although in proper context they may serve as useful benchmarks for program evaluation.

### **Rearrest vs. Reoffense Recidivism Rates** *New*

- Recidivism rates as measured by rearrest are higher than rates measured by reoffense (reconviction) (e.g., 2-year rate— rearrest: 60.2% vs. reoffense: 36.2%).
- Rearrest and reoffense recidivism rate curves have the same general characteristics— a relatively rapid increase early after prison with continuing increases at a declining pace as more time passes from release.

## **Factors Affecting Recidivism (Reoffense) Rates**

- Factors analyzed are those that many scientific studies have shown to influence rates.
- Only factors the Department has reliable, readily available data on are included.
- The individual effects of each factor on reoffense rates are described below.

### **Age Group** *Updated*

- Younger offenders reoffend at much higher rates than older offenders (e.g., 2-year rate— under 18: 51.3% vs. age 35-49: 30.0%).
- The youngest offenders reoffend sooner after release than older age groups. For example, it only takes 18 months for 47.0% of those under 18 to reoffend, whereas those age 25-34 reach 46.8% at 48 months.

### **Prior Recidivism (Reoffense)** *Updated*

- Inmates who have reoffended before do so again at higher rates than those who have not (e.g., 2-year rate— two or more priors: 55.6% vs. no priors: 32.3%).

### **Gender and Race** *Updated*

- Black males appear to reoffend at higher rates than white males (e.g., 2-year rate— black males: 39.9% vs. white males: 26.8%).
- White males and females reoffend at similar rates (e.g., 2-year rate— white males: 26.8% vs. white females: 26.5%).
- Some factor other than race may account for much of the difference between black and white male rates (+13.1 percentage points), because the race difference is lower between black and white females (+3.0 percentage points).

### **Education Level** *Updated*

- The tested education level of inmates at release is strongly related to their reoffense rates (e.g., 2-year rate— under grade 4: 39.1% vs. grade 12: 25.8%).
- Education grade level test results are used whether or not an inmate participated in education programs in prison. **This report does not measure the effect of prison education programs on recidivism.**

### **Offense Type** *Updated*

- Property offenders reoffend slightly more than drug offenders. Both groups reoffend much more than offenders imprisoned for violent offenses (e.g., 2-year rate— property offense: 39.4% vs. drug offense: 37.1% vs. violent offense: 25.7%).

### **Custody Class** *Updated*

- Inmates in close custody when released reoffend at higher rates than those released from either medium or minimum custody (e.g., 2-year rate— close custody: 40.7% vs. medium custody: 34.3% vs. minimum custody: 32.2%).

### **Total Disciplinary Reports** *Updated*

- Inmates who received more disciplinary reports are more likely to reoffend than those who received fewer disciplinary reports (e.g., 2-year rate— over 10 reports: 44.7% vs. no reports: 30.4%).

### **Time Served in Prison** *Updated*

- Inmates who serve less than 5 years reoffend at similar rates, but those who serve more than 5 years in prison reoffend at lower rates (e.g., 2-year rate— 5 years or less: range 33.9% - 35.1% vs. more than 5 years: 28.2%).

### **Combined Effect of Factors on Recidivism (Reoffense) Rates** *New*

- Statistical analysis shows these nine factors are significant and have the combined effect of improving our ability to predict which inmates recidivate as follows:

Months Since Release	Correct Predictions Expected by Chance	Correct Predictions by Model	Improvement in Predictions
18	55.9 %	66.5 %	19.0 %
36	50.1 %	61.5 %	22.8 %
60	60.6 %	74.0 %	22.0 %

### **Relative Effect of Factors on Recidivism (Reoffense) Rates** *New*

- Statistical analysis of the nine factors indicates the relative influence of each factor when controlling for all others, as follows:
  - **Age** – reoffense probability drops by 2.1% for each year older at release.
  - **Prior Recidivism** – prior reoffenders are 58.1% more likely to reoffend.
  - **Race** – blacks are 43.6% more likely to reoffend than non-blacks.
  - **Gender** – male inmates are 24.2% more likely to reoffend than females.
  - **Education** – reoffense probability drops by 2.9% for each higher grade of adult basic education tested.
  - **Offense** – primary property offenders are 13.9% more likely to reoffend; primary violent offenders are 31.9% less likely to reoffend.
  - **Custody** – releasees from close custody are 10.8% more likely to reoffend.
  - **Disciplinary Reports** – reoffense probability rises by 1.6% for each additional disciplinary report received.
  - **Time Served** – reoffense probability drops by 1.2% for each additional year served.

## **DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE**

[Full Report](#)

[Executive Summary](#)

[Technical Appendix](#)

Prepared by the Florida Department of Corrections, Bureau of Research and Data Analysis, May 2001

For more information visit our website: [www.dc.state.fl.us](http://www.dc.state.fl.us)

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