

The Truth About Recidivism

Recidivism rates measure the likelihood that an inmate who is released from prison will return to a Florida prison (not county jail) within three years. Other than deciding which inmates to include in the computation of this rate, there is no subjective part to the calculation. The Department's recidivism report complies with the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) counting rules for recidivism, which also specify a three year rate to measure recidivism.

Recidivism Rates by Facility Type and Custody at Release

An inmate's custody is determined by criminal history as well as behavior in prison. The custody of the inmate is not just a factor in determining where inmates are housed, but also a good predictor of recidivism risk. Higher custody inmates are much more likely to recidivate than low custody inmates and this relationship holds for both male and female inmates. Studies have shown that program resources produce more positive results on inmates with moderate to high risk to recidivate than on inmates with a low risk to recidivate.

The table below represents over 200,000 inmates who were released from Florida's public and private prisons between 2004 and 2011. For example, if an inmate was released on July 1, 2006 and returned to prison before July 1, 2009 then he would be considered a recidivist.

	Male Inmates		Female Inmates	
	Recidivism Rate	Number and Percent of Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number and Percent of Releases
Release from Major Institution				
Close Custody	39.6% recidivism rate	n = 33,344 15% of all males released	24.9% recidivism rate	n = 1,590 5% of all females released
Medium Custody	33.7% recidivism rate	n = 79,258 36% of all males released	21.2% recidivism rate	n = 6,583 23% of all females released
Minimum Custody	30.3% recidivism rate	n = 45,271 20% of all males released	18.1% recidivism rate	n = 9,261 32% of all females released
Community Custody	22.5% recidivism rate	n = 13,583 6% of all males released	13.0% recidivism rate	n = 4,183 14% of all females released
Release from Work Release / Transition Center (Overall, DC, and Contract Facilities)				
Community Custody	20.6% recidivism rate	n = 25,656 12% of all males released	11.5% recidivism rate	n = 4,770 16% of all females released
DC	21.4% recidivism rate	n = 20,774	11.2% recidivism rate	n = 2,802
Contract	16.4% recidivism rate	n = 4,882	12.0% recidivism rate	n = 1,968

Note: Inmates in community custody released from major institutions have recidivism rates similar to those released from work release / transition centers. The percent of releases does not sum to 100% because the table does not include the 11% of male releases and 9% of female releases who were released from a work/forestry camp or boot camp.