



# Rhode Island Department of Corrections

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Planning & Research Unit



2009 Recidivism Study: One Year Follow Up (Preliminary Report)

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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. Data from the 2009 release cohort 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 (unless otherwise noted).

## The Release Cohort

There were 3387 offenders released in CY09, accounting for 3699 distinct release events. The majority of offenders in the release group were white (54%), male (90%), and averaged 34 years of age at time of release.

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

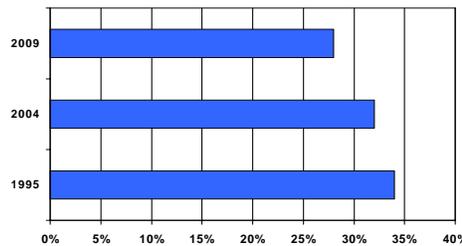
The median length of stay for released offenders was 4.7 months. As a result of the relatively short sentences, the most common manner of release was expiration of sentence (80%). Offenders were released from all facilities as well as from Home Confinement.

## Readmissions

At 1-year post-release, 28% of offenders have returned to RIDOC with a new sentence and 34% have returned as awaiting trial detainees. These numbers are lower than those observed with the 2004 release cohort, which were 32% and 44%, respectively.



Figure 1. One year recidivism rates by year of release.



As can be seen in the chart above, RIDOC has seen a gradual reduction in the 1-year re-sentence rates over the past 14 years, from 32% in 1995 to 28% in 2009.

### Sex of Offender & Return Rates:

Twenty-three (23%) percent of females were re-sentenced and 30% were re-admitted as pretrial detainees within 12-months of release. A slightly greater proportion of males (29%) were re-sentenced and 34% were re-admitted as pretrial detainees during the same period.

### Reasons for Re-sentencing:

Nearly half (47%) of offenders are re-sentenced for a new crime, while one-third return as probation violators and 19% as parole violators. In comparison to the 2004 study, there has been a 15% reduction in

probation violations and a similar (12%) increase in parole violations.

### Jail versus Prison Releases:

As RIDOC operates a unified correctional system, both jail and prison inmates are under RIDOC's jurisdiction. In order to compare RIDOC's population to other jurisdictions, "jail" offenders are those serving 1 year or less and "prisoners" are those offenders serving greater than 1 year.

Twenty-nine percent (29%) of "jail" offenders recidivated, compared to 27% of "prison" offenders. These percentages remain unchanged from the 2004 release group.

### How Does RI Compare?

A recent PEW Center report indicates that national 3-year recidivism rates have remained over 40% from 1999 to 2004. For RIDOC, 30% of prisoners released in 2004 returned to serve a new prison sentence within 3 years, 10% less than the national average.

*A full recidivism report will be produced for fall 2011 and will include analysis of a number of new elements such as offender program participation and behavior while incarcerated.*