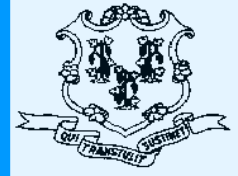


Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division

Recidivism & Weapons



RESEARCH, ANALYSIS & EVALUATION — WWW.CT.GOV/OPM/CriminalJustice/Research

Findings

- Of 16,241 sentenced offenders released or discharged from prison in 2005: 4,991 had been arrested on a weapons charge and 2,449 had a prior conviction for a weapons offense. 1,911 had served time in prison for weapons either during their last sentence or during an earlier incarceration.
- Offenders with a history of weapons charges who were released or discharged from Connecticut prisons in 2005 had higher recidivism rates than offenders who have not been sentenced for similar charges.
- Seventy-five percent (75%) of male offenders, who had ever served a prison sentence for weapons, were rearrested within three years of their release or discharge from prison. Among males without sentence histories involving weapons, only 67% were rearrested.
- 87% of offenders who had a sentence history involving weapons also had been incarcerated for other serious crimes including violent felonies, drug or property crimes. 65% of weapons offenders had also served a prison sentence for a drug offense.

This report was produced at the request of Robert Farr, Chairman of the Connecticut Board of Pardons and Paroles. The CT Statistical Analysis Center at OPM will consider requests for specialized criminal justice research from agencies that participate in the Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission (CJPAC).

Sentences for weapons charges

This study is based on analysis of the complete, adult criminal histories of 16,241 sentenced offenders who were released or discharged from a state prison in 2005¹. Approximately 12% of these offenders (1,911 adults) served their last prison sentence, or a prior prison sentence, in Connecticut for a crime involving the illegal use, or possession, of a weapon.

Three weapons offenses (29-035, 29-038 and 53-206) accounted for almost 51% of all weapons-related charges that resulted in prison sentences.

Male offenders were much more likely to have served a prison sentence on a weapons charge. Among males, 13% had a sentence

history involving at least one of the charges listed in Table 1. Among females, only 3% had ever been sentenced to prison for any of these offenses.

Table 1. Weapons offenses resulting in a prison term

Statute	Offense	Freq.
29-035	CARRYING OF WEAPONS WITHOUT PERMIT	543
29-038	CARRYING WEAPON IN A MOTOR VEHICLE	403
53-206	CARRYING OR SALE OF DANGEROUS WEAPON	380
53A217	CRIM POSS FIREARM/ELEC WEAP	246
29-035A	CARRY PIST/RVOLV W/O PERMIT	235
53A212	STEALING A FIREARM	212
53A217C	CR POSS PIS/REVOLVER	141
53A174A	POSS OF A WEAPON IN A CCI	120
53A060A	ASSAULT 2ND DEGREE WITH A FIREARM	47
53A211	POSSESSION OF SHOTGUN/SILENCERDF	46
53A134A2	ROBBERY 1	44
53-203	UNLAWFUL DISCHARGE OF FIREARMS M	31
53-202C	POSS OF ASSAULT WEAPON PROHIBITED	21
53A055A	MANSLAUGHTER 1ST, FIREARM	18
29-036	ALTERING OR REMOVING IDENT NUMBER	17
53A092A	KIDNAPPING, 1ST DEGREE W/FIREARM	16
29-033	ILL/TRANSFER/PISTOL/REVOLVER	11
53-206C	SALE,CARRY & BRAND FACSIMILE	11
53A103A	BURGLARY 3RD W/FIREARM	11
	17 OTHER WEAPONS OFFENSES	59
TOTAL		2,612

Weapons offenses and offender risk

Low-risk offenders were considerably less likely to have ever served a prison sentence for a weapons offense than higher risk offenders. The Connecticut Department of Correction currently uses a risk assessment instrument called the Treatment Program Assessment Instrument (TPAI) to assign risk scores to offenders in its custody. The score is based on several criteria including the offender's age and the character and extensiveness of the offender's criminal history.

Among the 2,798 male offenders with the lowest, TPAI-risk scores (1 to 3) only 2% had ever been sentenced to prison for a weapons offense. Among 1,625 higher-risk male offenders, those with TPAI scores of 7 or 8, 36% had served a prison sentence for one or more weapons charges prior to 2005.

¹ Recidivism rates for this group were analyzed in greater detail in OPM's 2010 Annual Recidivism Report published in February 2010.

Recidivism rates

Offenders who were sentenced to prison for weapons offenses recidivated at higher rates than offenders whose sentence histories contained no record of weapons-related crimes.

A much higher proportion of male offenders were incarcerated for weapons charges than female offenders. Among 14,391 male, sentenced offenders who were released or discharged from prison in 2005, approximately 13% had served time for a weapon offense.

Table 2. Recidivism and male offenders w/guns

Recidivism type	Time frame	Without weapons charge	With weapons charge
New arrest	12 months	42.2%	47.8%
	24 months	59.5%	67.5%
	36 months	67.5%	75.2%
Any return to prison	12 months	34.5%	41.8%
	24 months	49.3%	59.5%
	36 months	56.6%	67.1%
New prison sentence	12 months	13.5%	15.9%
	24 months	27.9%	34.3%
	36 months	36.8%	45.5%
Male offenders		12,529	1,862

By any measure, offenders who had ever served a prison term on a weapons charge recidivated at higher rates than offenders who did not serve a sentence for weapons. Within three years, 45.5% of male weapons offenders were returned to prison to serve a new sentence. Among non-weapons offenders the rate was 36.8%.

Offenders with weapons histories

Although only 12% of offenders released from prison in 2005 had served a prison sentence for a weapons charge, a much higher percentage of offenders had criminal histories involving weapons.

When prior state arrest and conviction records for all 16,241 offenders in the study were evaluated, the number of offenders who had been arrested or convicted on weapons charges proved to be significantly larger than the 1,911 offenders who had served a sentence for a weapons offense. In fact, 31% of offenders released in 2005 (4,991 offenders) had been arrested for a weapons offense at some point before their 2005 release.

The top three weapon-related arrest charges were identical to the three most common gun charges that resulted in prison sentences. They accounted for 46% of all weapon-related arrest charges.

Together these 4,991 offenders were arrested on a total of 12,650 weapons-related charges on 7,039 separate criminal dockets.

Approximately 80% of these offenders (4,090) were convicted for either the weapons offense or some other charge on the docket. 2,449 offenders, or 15% of the 2005-release group, were convicted of at least one prior weapon-related crime.

Table 3. Most common weapons charges at arrest

Statute	Offense	Frequency	Percent
29-38	WPN IN MTR VEH	2,499	20%
29-35(a)	NO PISTOL PRMIT	2,078	16%
53-206(a)	CARRY DNGRS WPN	1,414	11%
53a-212	STEAL FIREARM	1,298	10%
53a-217	CRIM WEAPON POS	970	8%
53-206	CARRY/SELL WPN	875	7%
53-203	IL FIRE FIREARM	633	5%
53a-216	CRIM WEAPON USE	511	4%
53a-217c	CR POSSESS GUN	451	4%
----	57 OTHER OFFENSES	1,921	15%
Total		12,650	100%

The recidivism rates of offenders who had served prison sentences for weapon charges were only slightly higher than the rates for offenders who had been arrested or convicted on weapons charges but had avoided prison for these offenses.

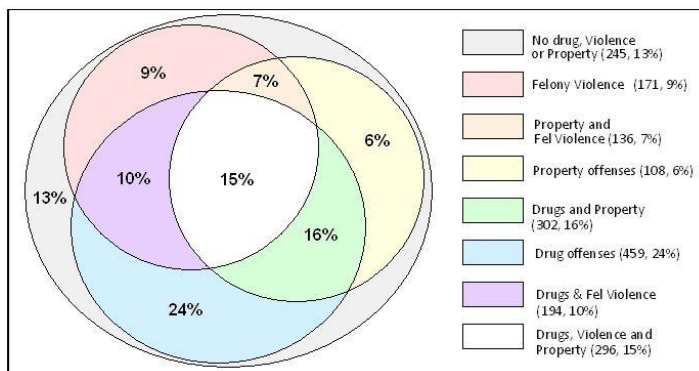
Table 4. Recidivism among males with weapons

	Gun-charge arrest	Gun-charge conviction	Gun-charge sentence
Male offenders	4,785	2,286	1,862
Any return to prison			
12 months	41%	41%	42%
24 months	57%	58%	60%
36 months	65%	66%	67%

Weapons and other crimes

Most sentenced weapons offenders also served time in prison for other crimes including felony violence (42%), drugs (65%) or property offenses (44%).

Figure 1. Weapons offenders and other prison sentences



Among the 1,251 sentenced weapons offenders who were also drug offenders, 302 had also been sentenced for property offenses. Another 194 had been sentenced for a violent offense. 296 weapons offenders, or 16% of the total, had served a prison sentence for violence, drugs and property crimes.