

OPM - Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division

CT recidivism rates, 2014 cohort

Highlights

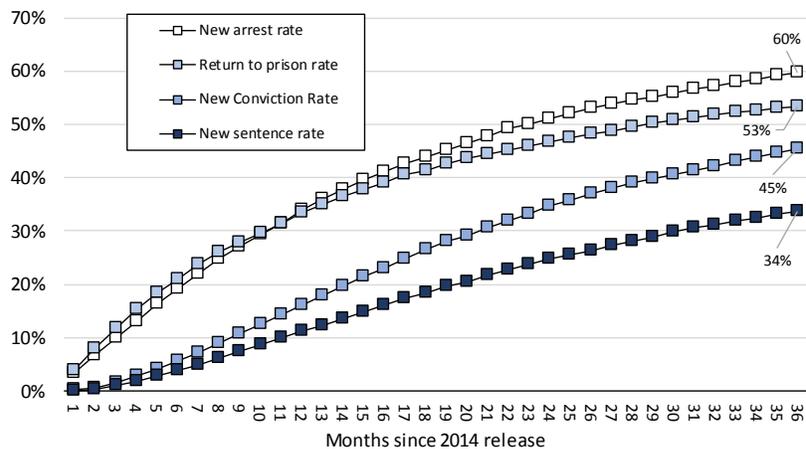
- During 2014, 11,245 men and women left prison facilities in the state having completed, or partially completed, a prison sentence. Over the next 3 years:
 - 60% were re-arrested,
 - 53% were returned to prison, for at least one single day,
 - 45% were convicted for a new offense, and
 - 34% returned to prison to begin a new term of incarceration.
- Offenders could be returned to prison for a variety of reasons including new criminal charges or technical violations of their community supervision.
- Overall, women who were released from prison in 2014 recidivated at moderately lower rates than men, regardless of the type of recidivism (see page 2).
- Many offenders returned to prison more than once during the 36-month study window. Among the 6,026 offenders who were returned to prison within three years, less than a third were admitted only once (see page 3).
- General recidivism rates have been dropping at a moderate pace over the last decade. Between 2011 and 2014, recidivism rates declined for every category of recidivism with the exception of return-to-prison rates for men.
- When segmented by offender age and prior sentence history, the 3-year return to prison rate varied between 15% and over-80% for different sub-groups in the 2014-release cohort.

Overall recidivism rates – 2014 release cohort

The Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division (CJPPD) at CT OPM is required to report on recidivism among Connecticut prisoners on an annual basis. OPM calculates four separate measures of recidivism for offenders leaving prison. They are: 1) new arrests 2) new convictions 3) returns-to-prison for any reason, and 4) returns-to-prison to begin a new sentence of incarceration.

OPM typically produces analysis based on the 3-year period following an offender's release from prison. In earlier studies, CJPPD has reported on recidivism rates among prisoners released in 2004, 2005, 2008 and 2011. This report tracks offenders who left prison in 2014.

3-year recidivism rates for offenders leaving prison in 2014



	New arrest rate	New conviction rate	Return-to-prison rate	New sentence rate
6 months	19%	6%	21%	4%
12 months	34%	16%	33%	11%
24 months	51%	35%	47%	25%
36 months	60%	45%	53%	34%

For its analysis, OPM relies on data provided by the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) in the Judicial Branch and the CT DOC MIS Unit. OPM has followed the same research methodology for almost a decade. The recidivism rates shown here aggregate the first recidivism event, over time, for each recidivating offender in the cohort.

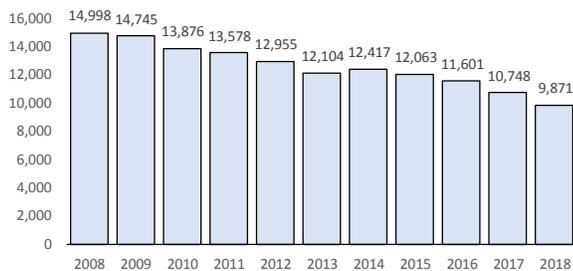
Because the overall recidivism rate changes so incrementally, OPM has chosen to evaluate prisoner-cohorts spaced at three year intervals. The data used in this report ran through December 31, 2017. Over the next two years, OPM anticipates that it will produce two further analyses of recidivism among the 2014 cohort. In the past, OPM's off-year analysis has focused on recidivism among specific subgroups of offenders that present special challenges to the prison system.

Recidivism and CT prisons

Connecticut is one of six states in the nation with a unified prison system. In unified systems, both prisons and jails are operated by the state, and the incarcerated population is composed of both sentenced prisoners and pre-trial detainees. In most states, county-level government operates the jails. The recidivism rates reported here are restricted to sentenced prisoners leaving prison in 2014.

CT's prison population has been declining for a decade and the sentenced component of that population has been shrinking at an even faster rate. The number of sentenced prisoners currently incarcerated, is at its lowest level since early-1993. With fewer prisoners, there are fewer sentenced offenders leaving prison each year. As a result, the size of the prisoner-cohorts OPM uses in its analysis has been declining. The 2014-release cohort includes 11,245 men and women, 10.6% less than the 2011-release cohort that included 12,579 male and female offenders.

CT's Sentenced prison population



In addition to contracting, the composition of the sentenced population has also changed significantly. Legislation that raised the age at which youths could be treated as adults in the criminal justice system dramatically reduced the number of young offenders in state prisons.

While the overall size of the 2014 cohort was 10.6% smaller than the 2011-prisoner cohort, the number of offenders under the age of 25 declined by 31%. The number of offenders under age-18 dropped by an astounding 74% between 2011 and 2014. Despite this, the number of sentenced women declined by only a meager 3.5%.

Changes in the 2011 and 2014 cohorts

	2011 cohort	2014 cohort	Change
All	12,579	11,245	-10.6%
All - men	11,235	9,948	-11.5%
All - women	1,344	1,297	-3.5%
Under 25	2,712	1,878	-30.8%
Under 18	236	62	-73.7%

Since younger offenders tend to recidivate at higher rates than their older counterparts, fewer young offenders might be expected to translate into lower overall recidivism rates.

Recidivism and gender

Regardless of the measure, women offenders recidivated at lower rates than their male counterparts. While the reasons are not entirely clear, it is well acknowledged that the circumstances and pathways into prison for most women is considerably different than it is for most male prisoners.

Recidivism rates and gender, 2014-cohort

	2014 cohort, all	2014 female cohort	2014 male cohort
Cohort size	11,245	1,297	9,948
New arrest rate			
6 month	19%	20%	19%
12 month	34%	32%	34%
24 month	51%	48%	51%
36 month	60%	56%	60%
New conviction rate			
6 month	6%	5%	6%
12 month	16%	14%	16%
24 month	35%	31%	35%
36 month	45%	40%	46%
Return-prison rate			
6 month	21%	17%	22%
12 month	33%	26%	34%
24 month	47%	38%	48%
36 month	53%	43%	55%
New sentence rate			
6 month	4%	3%	4%
12 month	11%	8%	12%
24 month	25%	18%	26%
36 month	34%	24%	35%

On average, female prisoners in the cohort were admitted to prison at an older age than their male counterparts. For males, more than 50% of the group had been admitted to the CT DOC by the age of 21. In contrast, only 26% of women had been admitted by the age of 21.

By the age of 30, 82% of the men had already been admitted to a DOC facility at least once: for women the figure was 63%. On average, male offenders first entered the DOC at the age of 24. Among female offenders the average age of first DOC entry was 29. Despite all this, the mean age of women in the 2014-cohort (35.1 years), only slightly older than the mean age for male members of the cohort (34.5 years).

In addition to entering prison at an earlier age, the average male offender had a more extensive sentence history with the DOC. Among women, over half (51%) were completing their first or second prison sentence at the time of their 2014 release. Among men, slightly more than a third (34%) were completing their first or second prison sentence in the state.

The average female offender in the cohort had served 4 prison sentences in CT at the time of their 2014 release. Men in the cohort averaged prior 6 sentences.

The 2014 women's-cohort, generally, had lower sentence rates for violent offenses compared to males. While 16% of the men had been sentenced to prison for a felony assault, only 11% of women had served a sentence for the same offenses. Similarly, 16% of men had served time for robbery compared to only 10% of women.

Women exhibited higher sentence rates, than men in only two crime categories: theft/larceny and DUI offenses.

Prior sentences served by 2014 cohort members

Crime type	2014 male cohort	% of males	2014 female cohort	% of females
Court-related	6,529	66%	776	62%
Drug-related	4,444	45%	337	27%
Theft/larceny	3,435	35%	528	42%
DUI-related	2,184	22%	334	27%
Burglary	2,048	21%	112	9%
Felony Assault	1,608	16%	142	11%
Robbery	1,563	16%	121	10%
Weapon	1,592	16%	30	2%
Threat/stalk/harass	1,256	13%	43	3%
Sex crime	774	8%	16	1%
Risk of injury	557	6%	68	5%
Kidnap-related	233	2%	3	0%
Homicide	112	1%	13	1%
Murder	58	1%	2	0%

Court-related: VOPs, FTAs

Multiple returns to prison

The recidivism data shown on page 1 aggregates data for each offender based on the first recidivism event within the three-year study window. What the data does not reveal is that many offenders returned to prison more than once during the 3-years following their 2014 release.

In the following table, we observe that a significant proportion of offenders were returned to prison returned multiple times.

Of the 6,026 offenders who were returned to prison, within 3 years, only 32% (1,916) were readmitted just once. In fact, a larger percentage of offenders (38%) were returned to prison at least three times in the 3-years following their releases.

Offenders w/multiple returns

Number of returns to prison within 3 years	2014 cohort, all	2014 female cohort	2014 male cohort
1	1916	225	1691
2	1834	129	1705
3	1090	109	981
4	641	57	584
5	279	29	250
6	125	8	117
7	59	4	55
8	30	2	28
9	21	1	20
10+	31	3	28
Total	6026	567	5459
% returning once	32%	40%	31%

The 6,026 offenders who returned to prison were admitted to the DOC on 14,784 separate occasions during the following three years. Approximately 400 offenders were readmitted ten or more times. Not surprisingly, these offenders exhibited high rates of chronic substance abuse and/or mental health issues.

Recidivism: 2011 and 2014

Connecticut has been fortunate in recent years with respect to trends in the criminal justice system. According to FBI data, crime rates, for both property and violent crime, have declined dramatically. As a consequence, many fewer people are being arrested each year and fewer are being convicted and sentenced to prison. With raise-the-age legislation, CT essentially eliminated youth under the age of 18 from the prison system without a significant jump in reported crime rates. Overall recidivism rates have been declining for a decade.

3-year recidivism rates, 2005 through 2014

	2005	2008	2011	2014
New arrest	66%	64%	63%	60%
New conviction	54%	51%	50%	45%
Return to prison	56%	54%	54%	53%
New sentence	37%	37%	35%	34%

In the 2014-cohort, almost two-thirds of the offenders who returned to prison did so as pre-trial detainees, on new charges. A quarter of the offenders who returned, were re-admitted to prison as remandees, having violated the technical conditions of their community supervision.

First returns to prison

	Offenders, 1st return	% of returns
Pre-trial admit	3821	64%
Technical violation	1473	25%
Criminal violation	458	8%
Return absconder/escapee	196	3%
Without prejudice	40	1%
Return from other juris.	16	0%
Offenders who returned	6004	100%

In recent years, the remand rate for parolees has attracted some scrutiny in the state. Since 2017, the CT DOC and the Board of Pardons and Paroles (BOPP) have undertaken a major reassessment of remand policies and practice. OPM will be tracking the impact of these reforms.

3-year recidivism rates, 2011 and 2014

	Women		Men	
	2011	2014	2011	2014
Cohort size	1,344	1,297	11,235	9,948
New arrest				
6 month	20%	20%	21%	19%
12 month	36%	32%	39%	34%
24 month	54%	48%	55%	51%
36 month	61%	56%	63%	60%
New conviction				
6 month	9%	5%	8%	6%
12 month	21%	14%	23%	16%
24 month	39%	31%	44%	35%
36 month	49%	40%	55%	46%
Return-to-prison				
6 month	18%	17%	21%	22%
12 month	26%	26%	34%	34%
24 month	37%	38%	48%	48%
36 month	44%	43%	55%	55%
New sentence				
6 month	5%	3%	4%	4%
12 month	10%	8%	13%	12%
24 month	20%	18%	27%	26%
36 month	28%	24%	37%	35%

A range of recidivism rates

In any discussion of recidivism it is important for readers to maintain sight of the fact that an entire prisoner-release cohort, like the one observed here, is a non-homogenous population. Although entire cohorts of prisoners may behave similarly over time, and exhibit comparable outcomes, there are sub-groups within the population - some quite large - that behave much better, or much worse than the average with respect to recidivism.

In the following table, the total 2014-release cohort has been segmented into 25 subgroups based on offender ages and their sentence histories. The columns show the age quintiles of offenders by their ages in 2014. The rows segment the offenders by the number of prison sentences the offenders had served with the DOC prior to their 2014 release.

The top section of the table shows the percentage at which each subgroup that was returned to prison within three years. The lower table, lists the number of offenders in each subgroup.

From top section we observe that the 3-year, return-to-prison rate varies widely, between 15% -for 47 to 92 year-olds who were completing their first prison sentence - to over 80% for offenders under the age of 30 who had completed 13 or more sentences with the DOC. Let us recall, the return-to-prison recidivism rate for the entire cohort was 53%.

From the table we can observe two truisms with respect to recidivism 1) recidivism rates decline with age if we hold the sentence history constant, and 2) recidivism rates worsen across all age groups as an offender's sentence history increases.

Return-to-prison, age and sentence history

Prior sentences	Age quintiles - 2014 cohort				
	15 to 25	26 to 30	31 to 37	38 to 46	47 to 93
Return-to-prison recidivism rate					
First	52%	32%	31%	26%	15%
2nd or 3rd	64%	50%	47%	35%	29%
4th to 6th	71%	67%	59%	43%	41%
7nd to 12th	82%	77%	70%	59%	53%
13 or more	89%	83%	76%	75%	65%
Offender distribution					
First	806	469	407	357	428
2nd or 3rd	859	590	527	418	409
4th to 6th	462	589	594	410	352
7nd to 12th	157	381	665	618	470
13 or more	9	36	193	456	579

This report was produced by the Research Unit in the Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division at the **Connecticut Office of Policy and Management.**

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