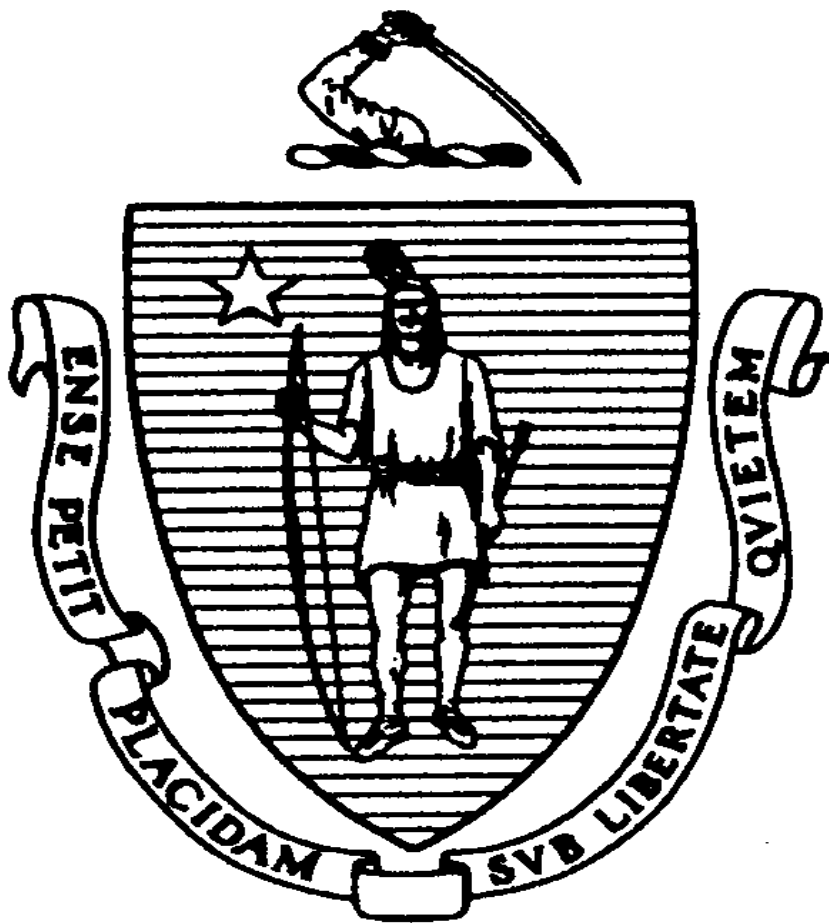


# 1996 Court Commitments to the Massachusetts Department of Correction

Massachusetts Department of Correction



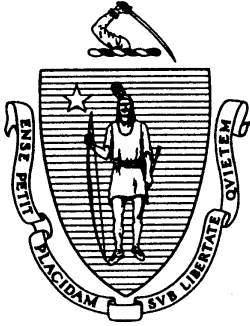
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**Kathleen M. O'Toole**  
*Secretary of Public Safety*

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The contribution of Northeastern University student intern Raymond Youngs is greatly appreciated.

This report is accessible on the DOC website at [www.magnet.state.ma.us/doc](http://www.magnet.state.ma.us/doc) and is also available at the following libraries: Massachusetts State Library, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., Boston Public Library, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Springfield City Library, and Worcester Public Library.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Research and Planning.

## Abstract

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**T**his report is a statistical description of the individuals committed by the courts to a term of incarceration in the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) during the year 1996. Also included in the report are individuals who began serving a new sentence during the year (from and after sentence). Parole and probation violators that are committed during the year are not covered in this report.

This report contains information on the present offense and personal background characteristics of new court commitments to the DOC. Some highlights of the statistics presented are:

- ⇒ **Overall, there were a total of 3,053 new commitments in 1996; 1,968 male and 1,085 female.**
  
- ▷ **For offenses committed after June 30, 1994, the “truth in sentencing” law eliminated the reformatory (MCI-Concord) sentence. During 1996 only 32 males and 32 females were incarcerated for a reformatory sentence.**
  
- ▷ **From 1995 to 1996, the median minimum sentence for MCI-Cedar Junction commitments decreased from four years to three years, and the median maximum sentence for MCI-Framingham commitments remained at less than one year. The median maximum sentence for MCI-Concord commitments was five years for 1994, 1995 and 1996.**
  
- ▷ **Three percent of the commitments in 1996 were for a life sentence, the same proportion as in 1994 and 1995.**
  
- ▷ **Violent offenses (person and sex offenses) accounted for 52 percent of all male commitments and 15 percent of all female commitments. Non-violent offenses (property, drug and ‘other’) represented 85 percent of all female commitments and 48 percent of all male commitments.**
  
- ▷ **The median age of male commitments was 28 years old, while for female commitments it was 31 years old; overall, the median age of commitments was 30 years old.**
  
- ▷ **Forty-six percent of the committed population was Caucasian, 26 percent was African American, 27 percent was Hispanic, and approximately two percent was other races.**

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## Introduction

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This report presents a statistical description of individuals committed by the courts to the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) during 1996. The report contains information about the present offense and personal background characteristics of individuals committed from the courts. Trends in court commitments over the last five to ten years are also discussed. This report is based on information entered on the DOC inmate database by staff at the Research and Planning Division, as well as DOC committing institutions.

All new court commitments and those individuals who began serving a new sentence during the year are included in this report. If an individual was committed to the Department more than once during 1996, each court commitment for that individual is counted separately. Some categories of offenders are not included in this report: those who began serving "B" and "C" sentences during 1996 (sentences received for crimes committed on parole).

This report examines commitment data by gender, for 1996 and past years. Although there were 32 commitments for reformatory sentences in 1996, the bulk of male commitments (98 percent) were for state prison sentences.

The following information is helpful when reading the tables in the back of the report. Each table is divided according to gender. Since the data varies by gender, it is important to consider each column in the table and the total column. The columns marked "N" represent the number of individuals who fall into the corresponding category in the table. The columns marked "%" represent the percentage of the number of individuals in a particular category to the total number of commitments for that gender (column percents). Due to rounding of percents to whole numbers, the table percentages may not total to 100.

# Trends in Court Commitments to the DOC, 1987 to 1996

There were 3,053 commitments during 1996, a six percent decrease from the previous year. Figure 1 shows the number of commitments for the ten year period 1987 to 1996. The number of commitments increased from 1987 to 1990, decreased from 1991 to 1993, increased from 1994 to 1995, and decreased in 1996.

Figure 1.  
Number of Commitments,  
1987 to 1996

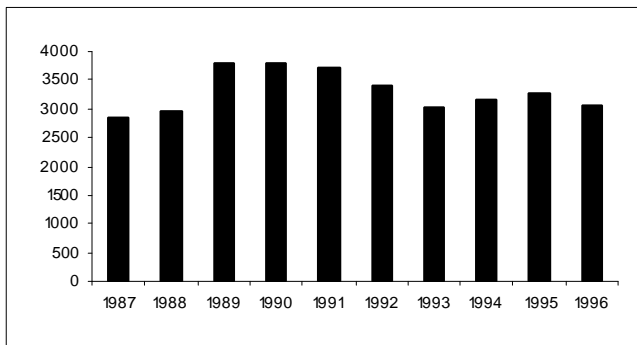


Figure 2 and Table 1 show the number of commitments by gender for the period 1987 to 1996. The number of male commitments decreased from 1987 to 1988, followed by an increase from 1989 to 1991 and a decrease from 1992 to 1996.

Commitments of females increased steadily during the three year period from 1987 to 1989, followed by a decrease in commitments for the years 1990 through 1993, and an increase for 1994 through 1996. From 1987 to 1996, commitments increased 7 percent for both males and females.

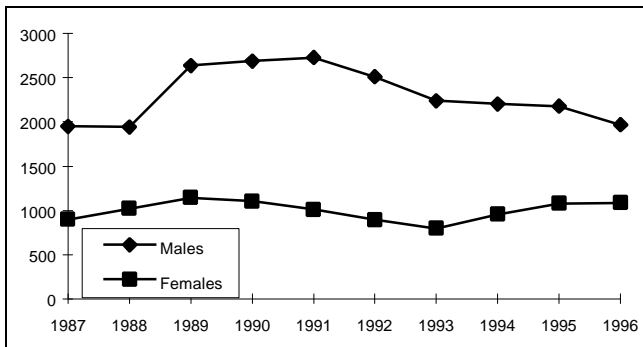


Figure 2.  
Number of Commitments by Gender,  
1987 to 1996

From 1995 to 1996, changes in commitment levels varied by gender. Male commitments decreased from 2,179 in 1995 to 1,968 in 1996, a decrease of 211 commitments or ten percent. Female commitments increased slightly from 1,079 commitments in 1995 to 1,085 in 1996, an increase of six commitments or 1 percent. Overall, commitments decreased by 205 commitments, or six percent from 1995 to 1996.

Table 1.  
Number of Commitments by Gender,  
1987 to 1996

	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>
Males	2848	2965	3780	3794	3737	3407	3037	3161	3258	1968
Females	897	1022	1142	1104	1009	895	796	957	1079	1085
<b>Total</b>	<b>2848</b>	<b>2965</b>	<b>3780</b>	<b>3794</b>	<b>3737</b>	<b>3407</b>	<b>3037</b>	<b>3161</b>	<b>3258</b>	<b>3053</b>

## Trends in Court Commitments to the DOC, 1992 to 1996

---

Table 2 and Figures 3 and 4 show selected characteristics of offenders committed to the DOC over the last five years, 1992 to 1996. These characteristics are displayed separately by gender and for total male and female commitments.

Overall, the number of commitments decreased 10 percent (N=354) from 3,407 commitments in 1992 to 3,053 commitments in 1996. From 1992 to 1993, commitments decreased, they increased in 1994 and 1995, followed by a decrease in 1996.

### Present Offense

Present offense represents the offense for which an individual is currently serving a sentence. As seen in Table 2, the proportion of commitments for violent offenses (i.e. crimes against the person and sex offenses) decreased slightly over the last five years. In 1992, 46 percent of DOC commitments were for violent offenses and 54 percent were for non-violent offenses (i.e. property, drug, and 'other' offenses). In 1996, 38 percent of the commitments were for violent offenses and 62 percent were for non-violent offenses.

The proportion of commitments for person offenses decreased five percent between 1992 and 1996. For males committed for a person offense, the proportion decreased from 44 to 41 percent, while the percentage for females was 14 percent in 1992, 1995, and 1996, dropping only slightly 1993 to 1994

**The primary offense for which individuals were committed to the DOC changed over the past five years. The proportion of commitments for drug offenses increased, while the proportion committed for person offenses decreased.**

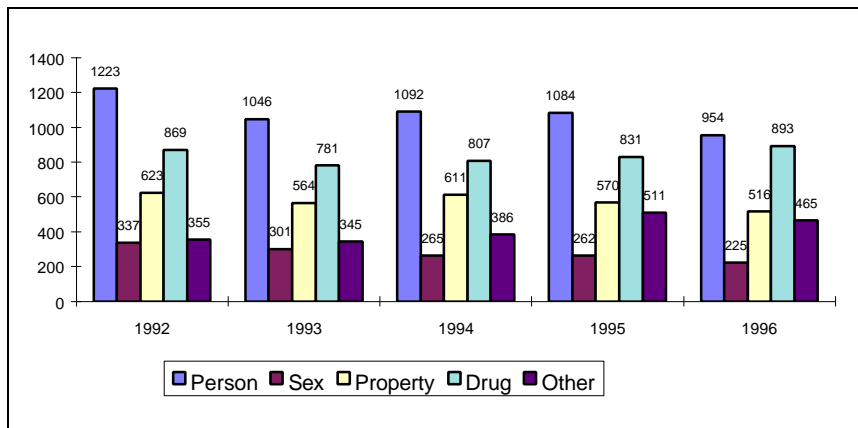
The proportion of individuals committed for sex offenses decreased slightly from ten percent to seven percent over the five year period. A decrease in the proportion of commitments for sex offenses is shown for male commitments from 13

percent in 1992 to 11 percent in 1996. The number of commitments for sex offenses decreased steadily for females from 12 in 1992 to 7 in 1996. Overall, commitments for sex offenses involving an adult victim (aggravated rape, rape, or indecent assault and battery) increased over the period, representing 32 percent of commitments for sex offenses in 1992 and 36 percent in 1996. Commitments for sex offenses involving a minor (rape of a child or indecent assault and battery of a child) decreased from 66 percent of commitments for sex offenses in 1992 to 61 percent in 1996.

The proportion of property offenses decreased for both male and female commitments between 1992 and 1996. Male commitments decreased from 15 percent in 1992 to 13 percent in 1996, while female commitments decreased from 29 percent in 1992 to 24 percent in 1996.

Commitments for drug offenses increased from 26 percent of commitments to 31 percent of commitments over the five year period. This increase occurred for both male and female commitments from 26 percent to 31 percent for male commitments, and 25 percent to 35 percent for female commitments.

The proportion of commitments for offenses in the 'other' offense category increased from ten to 15 percent of commitments over the past five years. The increase occurred for both male and female commitments. Male commitments for 'other' commitments increased slightly from three percent in 1992 to four percent in 1996. Female commitments comprised 31 percent of all 'other' commitments in 1992 and 35 percent in 1996. For MCI-Framingham commitments, the most common 'other' offenses were prostitution, operating under the influence of



alcohol, motor vehicle violations, and common night walker. For males, violation of the Bartley-Fox Gun Law, which carries a minimum sentence of 1 year, was most predominant, comprising 55 percent of the male 'other' offense category.

### Sentence Length

In Table 4, the distribution of sentence length over the past five years is shown by each committing institution. Upon comparing the distribution of sentence length for Cedar Junction commitments during 1992 with 1996, the proportion of commitments for sentences of less than 5 years increased drastically from 32 percent in 1992 to 63 percent in 1996. The proportion of commitments for sentences of 5-9 years decreased from 47 percent in 1992 to 25 percent in 1996. Commitments for sentences of 10-15 years decreased from 13 percent to six percent. The proportion of commitments with sentences of 16 years or more (including 'Life') was the same from 1992 and 1996, at seven percent.



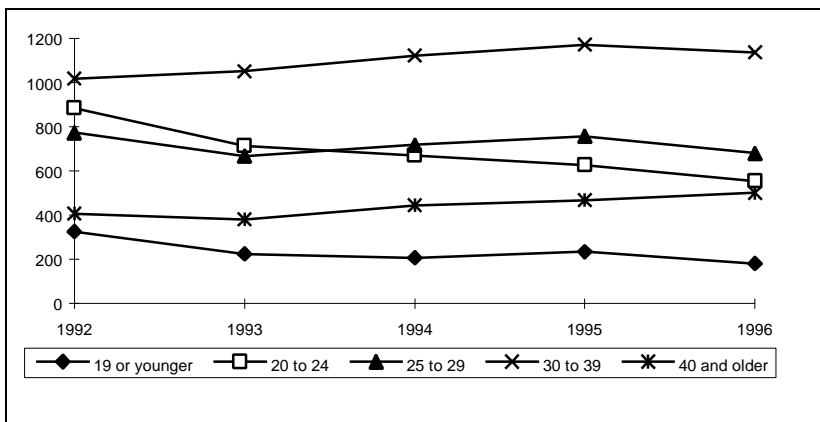
Sentence length distribution also changed for MCI-Concord commitments from 1992 to 1996. MCI-Concord commitments with sentence lengths of less than 5 years jumped from 15 percent in 1992 to 34 percent in 1996. For the category with sentences of 5-9 years, the proportion of MCI-Concord commitments decreased from 34 percent to 19 percent. There was also a decrease from 40 percent to 38 percent in the 10 to 15 year category, and from ten percent to nine percent in the category of 16 years or more.

Women committed to MCI-Framingham can serve a county, reformatory, or state prison sentence. Over the past five years, the number of women committed with state prison sentences decreased 18 percent (N=19), while women committed with reformatory sentences decreased 50 percent (N=32). Women committed with county sentences increased 33 percent (N=241). In 1992, 81 percent of MCI-Framingham commitments were for county sentences and 19 percent were for state prison or reformatory sentences, whereas in 1996, 89 percent of MCI-Framingham commitments were for county sentences and 11 percent were for state prison or reformatory sentences.

### Age at Incarceration

Table 5 and Figure 4 reveal that the age distribution of individuals committed to the Department of Correction shifted upward over the five year period. In 1992, 42 percent of the commitments were 30 or older. By 1996, 53 percent were age 30 or older. In 1992, 39 percent of the male commitments were 30 years or older. In 1996, 48 percent were

**Figure 4.**  
Age Distribution, 1992 to 1996



30 years or older, indicating an increase in the age of male commitments. The upward shift of the age distribution was more pronounced for female commitments. In 1992, 49 percent were 30 or older. In 1996, 63 percent were 30 years or older.

# Selected Characteristics of Offenders Committed to the DOC by Gender, 1992 to 1996

**Table 2**

<b>Present Offense</b>	<b>1992</b>		<b>1993</b>		<b>1994</b>		<b>1995</b>		<b>1996</b>	
<b>Males</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Person	1097	44	956	43	975	44	936	43	806	41
Sex	325	13	291	13	255	12	253	12	218	11
Property	366	15	328	15	321	15	311	14	252	13
Drug	648	26	586	26	575	26	582	27	608	31
Other	76	3	80	3	78	4	97	4	84	4
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>2512</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2241</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2204</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2179</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Females</b>										
Person	126	14	90	11	117	12	148	14	148	14
Sex	12	1	10	1	10	1	9	1	7	1
Property	257	29	236	30	290	30	259	24	264	24
Drug	221	25	195	25	232	24	249	23	285	26
Other	279	31	265	33	308	32	414	38	381	35
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>895</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1079</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>										
Person	1223	36	1046	34	1092	35	1084	33	954	31
Sex	337	10	301	10	265	8	262	8	225	7
Property	623	18	564	19	611	19	570	18	516	17
Drug	869	26	781	26	807	26	831	26	893	29
Other	355	10	345	11	386	12	511	16	465	15
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>3407</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3037</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3161</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3258</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3**

<b>Present Offense: Sex Offense</b>	<b>1992</b>		<b>1993</b>		<b>1994</b>		<b>1995</b>		<b>1996</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Rape/Assault-Adult	107	32	111	37	79	30	90	34	81	36
Rape/Assault-Minor	221	66	182	60	178	67	160	61	137	61
Other Sex Offense	9	3	8	3	8	3	12	5	7	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.**

**Sentence Length**

	1992		1993		1994		1995		1996	
<b>MCI-Cedar Junction:</b>										
<b>Minimum Sentence</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than 5 years	663	32	652	34	717	35	1144	54	1214	63
5 to 9 years	959	47	884	46	949	46	677	32	491	25
10 to 15 years	265	13	244	13	225	11	174	8	111	6
16 years or more	85	4	51	3	66	3	47	2	32	2
life	65	3	78	4	89	4	79	4	88	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2037</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1909</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2046</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2121</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1936</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>MCI-Concord:</b>										
<b>Maximum Sentence</b>										
Less than 5 years	73	15	69	21	46	29	22	38	11	34
5 to 9 years	164	34	91	27	53	34	14	24	6	19
10 to 15 years	191	40	146	44	51	32	18	31	12	38
16 years or more	47	10	26	8	8	5	4	7	3	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>MCI-Framingham:</b>										
<b>Type of Sentence</b>										
County	724	81	665	83	824	86	943	87	965	89
Reformatory	64	7	39	5	35	4	30	3	32	3
State Prison	107	12	92	12	98	10	106	10	88	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>895</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1079</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5

**Age at****Incarceration**

	1992		1993		1994		1995		1996	
<b>Males</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
19 years or younger	296	12	209	9	176	8	206	9	151	8
20 to 24 years	700	28	573	26	529	24	493	23	422	21
25 to 29 years	524	21	464	21	480	22	503	23	440	22
30 to 39	690	27	699	31	699	32	648	30	638	32
40 years and older	302	12	296	13	320	15	329	15	317	16
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>2512</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2241</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2204</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2179</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Females</b>										
19 years or younger	30	3	15	2	31	3	29	3	30	3
20 to 24 years	184	21	140	18	141	15	134	12	132	12
25 to 29 years	249	28	204	26	238	25	254	24	241	22
30 to 39 years	327	37	352	44	423	44	523	48	498	46
40 years and older	105	12	85	11	124	13	139	13	184	17
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>895</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1079</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>All Institutions</b>										
19 years or younger	326	10	224	7	207	7	235	7	181	6
20 to 24 years	884	26	713	23	670	21	627	19	554	18
25 to 29 years	773	23	668	22	718	23	757	23	681	22
30 to 39 years	1017	30	1051	35	1122	35	1171	36	1136	37
40 years and older	407	12	381	12	444	14	468	14	501	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>3407</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3037</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3161</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3258</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

# 1996 Court Commitments to the DOC

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This section presents a description of the population commitments to the DOC during 1996. This discussion is based on information presented in the tables beginning on page 12 of this report. It includes a description of the present offense and personal background characteristics of the offender. Where relevant, information is compared by gender or data from the previous year.

## Nature of Present Offense

In discussing the present offense of the commitment population, the 'governing offense' is represented. This is the offense for which the committed individual received the longest sentence.

**Committing Institution.** All 1,085 females committed to the DOC were incarcerated at MCI-Framingham, comprising 36 percent of 1996 commitments. Of the males, 1,936 received state prison (MCI-Cedar Junction) sentences and 32 received reformatory (MCI-Concord) sentences. Sixty-three percent of the 1996 commitments were state prison commitments and one percent were MCI-Concord commitments.

Committing Institution	Number of Commitments
MCI-Cedar Junction	1936
MCI-Concord	32
MCI-Framingham	1085
<b>Total</b>	<b>3053</b>

**Committing Court.** (Table 6) Sixty-eight percent of the commitments to the Department of

Correction were from Superior Courts. Five Superior Courts: Suffolk, Middlesex, Hampden, Worcester, and Essex accounted for 52 percent of commitments to the DOC. All 1996 male commitments came from Superior Courts. In contrast, ten percent of the commitments to MCI-Framingham were from Superior Courts. The majority of commitments to MCI-Framingham were from District Courts (90 percent). Table 7 delineates the distribution of court commitments to the DOC by each of the 14 counties in Massachusetts.

**Minimum Sentence.** (Table 8) Only those individuals who received a state prison sentence (all MCI-Cedar Junction commitments and some MCI-Framingham commitments) receive a minimum sentence. Generally, minimum state prison sentences must be for two and one-half years or more, but in some cases may be shorter (for example, 'one year' to 'one year and a day' sentences). The median minimum sentence for MCI-Cedar Junction commitments in 1996 was three years. There were 105 commitments to MCI-Framingham for state prison sentences, with a median minimum sentence of three years.

Ninety individuals received life sentences during 1996, two of whom were female. This number represented an increase of nine male commitments for life sentences and a decrease of one commitment for life sentences from 1995. The ninety life sentences included 51 for first-degree murder, 32 for second-degree murder, five for sex offenses, and two for other violent offenses.

**Maximum Sentence.** (Table 9) Commitments for reformatory (MCI-Concord) sentences receive only a maximum sentence. Generally, maximum sentences to MCI-Concord are two and one-half years or longer, but shorter sentences can be given for some offenses such as larceny, escape and drug offenses. The median maximum sentence for MCI-Concord commitments in 1996 was five years. (Table 4)

The average minimum sentence for MCI-Cedar Junction commitments was 3 years. The average maximum sentence for MCI-Concord sentences was 5 years.

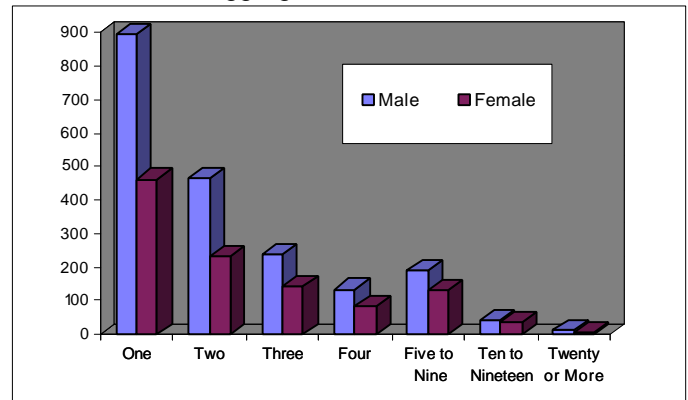
correction, while many of the Framingham. Of the 1,085 prison (MCI-Cedar Junction) sentences, and 965 (89%)

A number of commitments to the DOC, mostly women receive county sentences. A county sentence has a maximum sentence length of less than two and one-half years. Males receiving county sentences are committed to houses of females receiving county sentences are committed to MCI-commitments to MCI-Framingham, 88 (8 %) received state sentences, 32 (3 %) received reformatory (MCI-Concord) received county sentences, including 126 committed for non-payment of a fine.

**Type of Sentence.** (Table 10) Most individuals committed to the DOC during 1996 received simple sentences (36 percent) or concurrent sentences (42 percent). Eight percent of the commitments received split sentences\*; males (4 percent), and females (16 percent). Less frequently received were aggregate, forthwith or from and after sentences. From and after sentences were found more often among male commitments (2 percent) than female commitments, whereas aggregate sentences were more common for female commitments (5 percent). Twelve percent of the MCI-Framingham commitments were in lieu of payment of a fine.

**Number of Offenses.** (Table 11) As seen in Figure 5, forty-four percent of the commitments to the DOC had one offense which they were incarcerated, while 56 percent were committed for more than one offense. The number of offenses that resulted in the current commitment ranged from 1 to 46.

**Figure 5.**  
Number of Offenses  
by Gender



**Time Until Parole Eligibility.** (Table 12) An indication of how much time offenders will actually serve is the time until their parole eligibility (P.E.) date. For male commitments the median time until parole eligibility was 2-3 years, for female commitments the median time until parole eligibility was three months or less.

Individuals may not have a P.E. date for a number of reasons. Some mandatory sentences (including first-degree life) have no possible release to parole, while some sentences are too short for parole eligibility to be established, i.e., less than sixty days or fines. In a small number of cases, individuals can be beyond their original parole eligibility at the time of commitment to the DOC if they were in jail for a sufficient time awaiting sentencing.

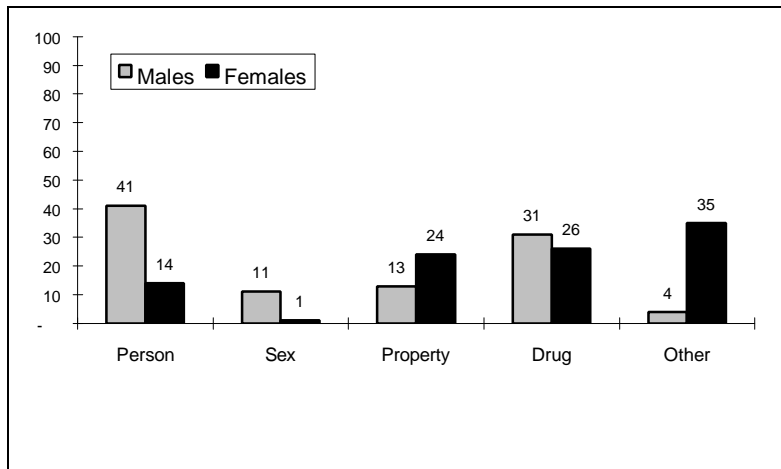
\* Due to the 'truth in sentencing' law, inmates committed to the DOC may no longer be given a split sentence by the court for crimes committed after June 30, 1994.

**Offense.** (Table 13) Type of offense varied by gender. Fifty-two percent of the male commitments were for violent offenses (person or sex offenses). In contrast, 15 percent of the female commitments were for violent offenses. Most women were committed for 'other' offenses (38 percent), drug offenses (26 percent), or property offenses (24 percent).

Offenses against the person (Table 14) accounted for 31 percent of all commitments to the DOC; 41 percent for males, and 14 percent for females. The most common offenses against the person were armed assault (N=331), armed robbery (N=243), and unarmed robbery (N=100). There were 135 commitments for homicides in 1996, a decrease of 15 from 1995. Commitments for homicide included 51 for first-degree murder, 32 for second-degree murder, 39 for manslaughter, and 13 for vehicular homicide.

Sex offenses (Table 15) accounted for seven percent of all commitments to the DOC, while 11 percent of female commitments were incarcerated for sex offenses. There were 177 commitments for rape during 1996 and 41 commitments for sexual assaults. Of the rapes and sexual assaults, 81 involved adult victims and 137 involved minors. Additionally, there were seven commitments for other sex offenses during 1996. Rape and abuse of a minor was the most common sex offense for which individuals were committed during 1996.

**Figure 6.**  
**Offense Type**  
**by Gender**



Drug offenses (Table 16) accounted for 29 percent of all commitments during 1996; 31 percent for males, and 26 percent for females. There were 406 commitments whose 'governing offense' was a mandatory drug offense, which accounted for 46 percent of all drug commitments. Of the male drug commitments, the majority (62 percent) were mandatory, versus 11 percent for females. The most

common drug offense for male commitments was Class-A First offense, which does not carry a mandatory term of incarceration. For female commitments, the most common drug offenses were Possession of Class-A, Possession of Class-B, and Possession of Class-B with Intent to Distribute. These drug offenses do not carry mandatory sentences.

Property offenses (Table 17) accounted for 17 percent of all commitments to the DOC, varying from 13 percent for males, to 24 percent for females. Burglary was the most common property offense for males; larceny was the most common property offense for female commitments.

Offenses in the 'other' category (Table 18) accounted for four percent of male commitments, 35 percent of female commitments, and 15 percent of all commitments to the DOC. The most common offenses in the 'other' category for female commitments were prostitution (N=121), operating under the influence of alcohol (N=110), motor vehicle offenses (N=54), and common night walker (N=36). The most common 'other' offense for male commitments was weapon violation of the Bartley-Fox Gun Law (N=46), which carries a mandatory minimum sentence of one year.

## Demographic Background Characteristics

In discussing the social and demographic background characteristics of the commitment population, all information is reported according to the status of the offender at the time of commitment. This information is reported by the offender and has not been officially verified.

**Age at Incarceration.** (Table 19) The median age of offenders at incarceration was 30 years, which was the same for 1995. The average age of 1996 commitments was 31 years, with an age range of 16 to 79 years. The median age of male commitments was 29 years, while the median age for female commitments was 31 years.

**Gender.** During 1996, 36 percent of the commitments were female and 64 percent were male. This represents an increase in the proportion of female commitments from 33 percent in 1995, and a decrease in the proportion of male commitments from 67 percent in 1995.

**Race and Ethnicity.** (Table 20) Forty-six percent of the 1996 commitments were Caucasian, 26 percent were African American, and 27 percent self-reported their ethnicity as Hispanic. There were also 23 Asians and 18 Native Americans committed to the DOC. A larger proportion of female commitments were Caucasian (63 percent), when compared with males (36 percent).

At time of commitment, the average age of offender was 29 years, 46% were Caucasian, the majority were U.S. Citizens, 68% were single, most were living in Massachusetts, and 19% reported a last residence of Boston.

When compared with commitments for 1995, the proportion of Caucasians decreased from 50 to 46 percent, while the proportion of African Americans remained the same, and Hispanics increased from 23 to 27 percent. The number of Asians dropped from 39 to 23 individuals, while the number of Native Americans rose from 12 to 18 individuals.

**Marital Status.** (Table 21) Most of the commitments were single (68 percent), fifteen percent were married, 11 percent were divorced, five percent were separated, and one percent were widowed.

Male commitments reported being single (71 percent) more often than females (63 percent). More males reported being married (17 percent) compared with females (11 percent), whereas more females reported being separated (9 percent) than males (3 percent).

**Prior Address.** (Table 22) Almost all commitments (95 percent) were living in Massachusetts prior to incarceration. Of these, three communities accounted for 36 percent of the commitments: Boston (N=576), Worcester (N=327), and Springfield (N=205).

The most common prior residence reported by males was Boston (24 percent), whereas the most common prior residence reported by females was Worcester (21 percent).

**Citizenship.** (Table 24) Ninety-eight percent of the commitments reported being U.S. citizens and 2 percent citizens of other countries. Fifty-seven percent of the commitments were born in Massachusetts, 19 percent were born in other states, 14 percent were born in U.S. territories, and 7 percent were U.S. citizens born in other countries.

The proportion of females who reported being U.S. citizens (99 percent) was higher than that of males (97 percent).



# **Nature of Present Offense**

**1996 Department of Correction Commitments**

Table 6.

Court from Which Committed	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Barnstable Superior	1	0	29	1	30	1
Berkshire Superior	4	0	63	3	67	2
Bristol Superior	7	1	147	7	154	5
Dukes Superior	0	0	0	0	0	0
Essex Superior	12	1	210	11	222	7
Franklin Superior	0	0	15	1	15	0
Hampden Superior	13	1	299	15	312	10
Hampshire Superior	1	0	14	1	15	0
Middlesex Superior	22	2	317	16	339	11
Norfolk Superior	2	0	76	4	78	3
Plymouth Superior	9	1	102	5	111	4
Suffolk Superior	14	1	449	23	463	15
Worcester Superior	24	2	242	12	266	9
District Courts	976	90	5	0	981	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 7.

County of Court From Which Committed	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Barnstable County	1	0	29	1	30	1
Berkshire County	4	0	63	3	67	2
Bristol County	10	1	147	7	157	5
Dukes County	0	0	0	0	0	0
Essex County	230	21	211	11	441	14
Franklin County	0	0	15	1	15	0
Hampden County	13	1	299	15	312	10
Hampshire County	1	0	14	1	15	0
Middlesex County	233	21	318	16	551	18
Nantucket County	0	0	0	0	0	0
Norfolk County	65	6	76	4	141	5
Plymouth County	134	12	102	5	236	8
Suffolk County	17	2	452	23	469	15
Worcester County	377	35	242	12	619	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 8.

Minimum Sentence	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less Than 1 Year	0	0	2	0	2	0
1 Year	12	1	161	8	173	6
2 Years	21	2	327	17	348	11
3 Years	22	2	526	27	548	18
4 Years	8	1	196	10	204	7
5 Years	6	1	237	12	243	8
6 Years	1	0	90	5	91	3
7 Years	4	0	77	4	81	3
8 Years	3	0	42	2	45	1
9 Years	2	0	45	2	47	2
10 Years	2	0	53	3	55	2
11 - 12 Years	3	0	23	1	26	1
13 - 15 Years	2	0	35	2	37	1
16 - 19 Years	0	0	16	1	16	1
20 - 24 Years	0	0	6	0	6	0
25 Years or More	0	0	10	1	10	0
Life	2	0	88	4	90	3
Indeterminate	997	92	34	2	1031	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 9.

Maximum Sentence	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fine	126	12	0	0	126	4
Less Than 1 Month	57	5	0	0	57	2
Less Than 1 Year	514	47	6	0	520	17
1 Year	206	19	56	3	262	9
2 Years	99	9	130	7	229	8
3 Years	22	2	383	19	405	13
4 Years	11	1	152	8	163	5
5 Years	26	2	463	24	489	16
6 Years	2	0	112	6	114	4
7 Years	2	0	147	7	149	5
8 Years	0	0	55	3	55	2
9 Years	4	0	32	2	36	1
10 Years	6	1	176	9	182	6
11 - 12 Years	3	0	54	3	57	2
13 - 15 Years	3	0	35	2	38	1
16 - 19 Years	0	0	19	1	19	1
20 - 24 Years	2	0	44	2	46	2
25 Years or More	0	0	16	1	16	1
Life	2	0	88	4	90	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 10.**

Sentence Type	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Simple Sentence	281	26	824	42	1105	36
Concurrent Sentence	432	40	967	49	1399	46
Aggregate Sentence	59	5	43	2	102	3
Forthwith Sentence	1	0	14	1	15	0
From & After Sentence	14	1	44	2	58	2
Split Sentence	172	16	76	4	248	8
Fine	126	12	0	0	126	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 11.**

Number of Charges Current Offense	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
One	462	43	896	46	1358	44
Two	231	21	464	24	695	23
Three	142	13	237	12	379	12
Four	83	8	133	7	216	7
Five to Nine	129	12	189	10	318	10
Ten to Nineteen	33	3	39	2	72	2
Twenty or More	5	0	10	1	15	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 12.**

Time Until Original Parole Eligibility	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
No P.E. Date	249	23	0	0	249	8
Past P.E. Date	7	1	12	1	19	1
1 - 3 Months	487	45	22	1	509	17
4 - 6 Months	164	15	40	2	204	7
7 - 9 Months	38	4	62	3	100	3
10 - 12 Months	62	6	137	7	199	7
13 - 18 Months	16	1	137	7	153	5
19 - 24 Months	24	2	271	14	295	10
2 - 3 Years	14	1	500	25	514	17
3 - 5 Years	12	1	424	22	436	14
5 - 10 Years	9	1	212	11	221	7
10 Years or More	1	0	102	5	103	3
Life	2	0	49	2	51	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 13.**

Present Offense: General Categories	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Person	148	14	806	41	954	31
Sex	7	1	218	11	225	7
Property	264	24	252	13	516	17
Drug	285	26	608	31	893	29
Other	381	35	84	4	465	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 14.**

Present Offense: Person Offenses	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not Applicable	937	86	1162	59	2099	69
Murder-1	2	0	49	2	51	2
Murder-2	0	0	32	2	32	1
Manslaughter	5	0	34	2	39	1
Vehicular Homicide	4	0	9	0	13	0
Aslt.-Attempt to Murder	0	0	11	1	11	0
Accessory to Murder	3	0	3	0	6	0
Armed Robbery	7	1	236	12	243	8
Unarmed Robbery	5	0	95	5	100	3
Armed Assault	54	5	277	14	331	11
Unarmed Assault	65	6	25	1	90	3
Stalking	2	0	6	0	8	0
Mayhem	0	0	10	1	10	0
Kidnapping	1	0	12	1	13	0
Extortion	0	0	1	0	1	0
Civil Rights Violation	0	0	2	0	2	0
Conspiracy	0	0	4	0	4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 15.

Present Offense: Sex Offenses	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not Applicable	1078	99	1750	89	2828	93
Rape	0	0	42	2	42	1
Aggravated Rape	0	0	24	1	24	1
Assault w.i. Rape	0	0	15	1	15	0
Rape of a Child	1	0	36	2	37	1
Rape & Abuse of Child	0	0	74	4	74	2
Ind. A&B of Child	2	0	24	1	26	1
Other Sex Offenses	4	0	3	0	7	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 16.

Present Offense: Drug Offenses	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not Applicable	800	74	1360	69	2160	71
Presence of Narcotics	1	0	0	0	1	0
Poss. of Syringe	18	2	0	0	18	1
Utter False Prescription	1	0	0	0	1	0
OUI Narcotics	1	0	0	0	1	0
Exploit Minor Sale-Dist.	0	0	2	0	2	0
Conspiracy to Viol. CSA	10	1	6	0	16	1
Poss. w.i. Dist.-No Class	20	2	1	0	21	1
Poss. w.i. Dist.-Class A	39	4	6	0	45	1
Poss. w.i. Dist.-Class B	52	5	3	0	55	2
Poss. w.i. Dist.-Class C	2	0	0	0	2	0
Poss. w.i. Dist.-Class D	4	0	0	0	4	0
Class A - First Offense	50	5	117	6	167	5
Class B - First Offense	51	5	99	5	150	5
Class C - First Offense	1	0	0	0	1	0
Class D - First Offense	3	0	0	0	3	0
* Class A - Repeat	2	0	13	1	15	0
* Class B - Repeat	0	0	35	2	35	1
* Class B PCP/Cocaine	10	1	67	3	77	3
* Class B PCP/Coke-Rpt.	2	0	9	0	11	0
* Class C - Repeat	0	0	1	0	1	0
* Marijuana 50-99 lbs.	0	0	2	0	2	0
* Cocaine 14-28 grams	3	0	64	3	67	2
* Cocaine 28-100 grams	4	0	95	5	99	3
* Cocaine 100-200 grams	1	0	10	1	11	0
* Cocaine 200 grams +	1	0	11	1	12	0
* Heroin 14-200 grams +	0	0	9	0	9	0
* Poss. w.i. School Zone	9	1	58	3	67	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

\*= Mandatory Term of  
Incarceration

**Table 17.**

Present Offense: Property Offenses	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not Applicable	821	76	1716	87	2537	83
Arson	3	0	20	1	23	1
Burglary-Armed	0	0	6	0	6	0
Burglary	25	2	142	7	167	5
Burglary-Tools	2	0	3	0	5	0
Stealing	63	6	8	0	71	2
Larceny	109	10	25	1	134	4
Motor Vehicle Theft	12	1	29	1	41	1
Forgery-Uttering	29	3	5	0	34	1
Common Theft	0	0	3	0	3	0
Recv. Stolen Goods	14	1	7	0	21	1
Property Injuries	7	1	4	0	11	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 18.**

Present Offense: Other Offenses	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not Applicable	704	65	1884	96	2588	85
Escape	1	0	3	0	4	0
Weapon Offenses	4	0	46	2	50	2
Common Nightwalker	36	3	0	0	36	1
Disturbing the Peace	22	2	0	0	22	1
Prostitution	121	11	1	0	122	4
Motor Vehicle Violations	54	5	1	0	55	2
Contempt of Court	12	1	0	0	12	0
Bribery	0	0	3	0	3	0
O.U.I.	110	10	19	1	129	4
Trespassing	10	1	11	1	21	1
Other	11	1	0	0	11	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

# **Demographic Background Characteristics**

**1996 Department of Correction Commitments**



**Table 19.**

Age at Incarceration	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
16 Yrs. Old	0	0	2	0	2	0
17 Yrs. Old	5	0	5	0	10	0
18 Yrs. Old	9	1	50	3	59	2
19 Yrs. Old	16	1	94	5	110	4
20 Yrs. Old	23	2	83	4	106	3
21 Yrs. Old	22	2	81	4	103	3
22 Yrs. Old	16	1	91	5	107	4
23 Yrs. Old	34	3	83	4	117	4
24 Yrs. Old	37	3	84	4	121	4
25 to 29 Yrs. Old	241	22	440	22	681	22
30 to 34 Yrs. Old	302	28	375	19	677	22
35 to 39 Yrs. Old	196	18	263	13	459	15
40 to 44 Yrs. Old	110	10	149	8	259	8
45 to 49 Yrs. Old	48	4	84	4	132	4
50 to 54 Yrs. Old	20	2	47	2	67	2
55 to 59 Yrs. Old	3	0	16	1	19	1
60 and Older	3	0	21	1	24	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 20.**

Race / Ethnicity*	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Caucasian	684	63	707	36	1391	46
African American	200	18	587	30	787	26
Native American	4	0	14	1	18	1
Asian	5	0	18	1	23	1
Hispanic	192	18	642	33	834	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

\* = This information is self-reported.

**Table 21.**

<b>Marital Status*</b>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Married	123	11	327	17	450	15
Single	679	63	1388	71	2067	68
Divorced	166	15	171	9	337	11
Widowed	18	2	15	1	33	1
Common Law	0	0	11	1	11	0
Separated	99	9	56	3	155	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 22.**

<b>Prior Address: Selected Cities/Towns*</b>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Boston	98	9	478	24	576	19
Brockton	85	8	52	3	137	4
Cambridge	14	1	31	2	45	1
Fall River	3	0	48	2	51	2
Framingham	24	2	22	1	46	2
Holyoke	4	0	41	2	45	1
Lawrence	47	4	72	4	119	4
Lowell	38	4	88	4	126	4
Lynn	69	6	63	3	132	4
New Bedford	7	1	44	2	51	2
Quincy	9	1	12	1	21	1
Somerville	10	1	21	1	31	1
Springfield	7	1	198	10	205	7
Worcester	231	21	96	5	327	11
Other Mass.	400	37	579	29	979	32
Out of State	39	4	123	6	162	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

\* = This information is self-reported.

**Table 23.**

Prior Address: County*	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Barnstable	7	1	14	1	21	1
Berkshire	4	0	43	2	47	2
Bristol	22	2	138	7	160	5
Dukes	0	0	0	0	0	0
Essex	197	18	213	11	410	13
Franklin	0	0	9	0	9	0
Hampden	14	1	292	15	306	10
Hampshire	1	0	13	1	14	0
Middlesex	184	17	253	13	437	14
Nantucket	0	0	1	0	1	0
Norfolk	37	3	43	2	80	3
Plymouth	121	11	89	5	210	7
Suffolk	110	10	534	27	644	21
Worcester	349	32	203	10	552	18
Out of State	39	4	123	6	162	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 24.**

Citizenship *	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
U.S. Citizen- Born in Mass.	726	67	1022	52	1748	57
U.S. Citizen- Born in Other State	206	19	380	19	586	19
U.S. Citizen- Born in U.S. Territory	112	10	319	16	431	14
U.S. Citizen- Foreign Born	31	3	197	10	228	7
Not a U.S. Citizen	10	1	50	3	60	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>100</b>

\* = This information is self-reported.

# Glossary

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## **Minimum Sentence/ Maximum Sentence**

In the tables, minimum and maximum sentence lengths are rounded to the closest whole year. For example, a sentence of 5 years, 1 day is included in the 5 year category.

## **Present Offense**

Represents the offense for which an individual is currently sentenced.

## **Offense Type**

### **Person Offense**

vehicular  
accessory to  
robbery, armed  
mayhem,  
violation, and

Includes murder-1, murder-2, manslaughter,  
homicide, assault with intent to murder,  
murder, armed robbery, unarmed  
assault, unarmed assault, stalking,  
kidnapping, extortion, civil rights  
conspiracy.

### **Sex Offense**

Includes rape, aggravated rape, assault with intent to rape, rape of a child, rape and abuse of a child, indecent assault and battery of a child and 'other' sex offenses.

### **Drug Offense**

Includes possession of a syringe, uttering a false prescription, OUI narcotics, exploiting a minor to sell/distribute drugs, conspiracy to violate the controlled substance act and possession with intent to distribute class A/B/C/D.

### **Property Offense**

Includes arson, armed burglary, burglary, possession of burglary tools, stealing, larceny, motor vehicle theft, forgery and uttering, common theft, receiving stolen goods and injury to property.

### **'Other' Offense acts**

Includes unnatural and lascivious acts, unnatural with a child, open and gross lewdness, and pornography.

### **Armed Assault**

Includes armed-assault with intent to rob or murder, armed assault in a dwelling house, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, armed assault to steal a motor vehicle, assault by means of a dangerous weapon, and home invasion.

### **Assault with Intent to Murder**

Includes attempted murder.

### **Assault with Intent to Rape**

Includes assault with intent to rape and indecent assault and battery.

### **Contempt of Court**

Includes failure to appear, perjury, violation of a court or restraining order, and abuse prevention act.

### **Rape of a Minor**

Includes rape of a female under sixteen, rape of a child, and statutory rape.

### **Unarmed Assault**

Includes unarmed assault with intent to rob or steal, assault, assault and battery, and other assaults.

### **Unarmed Robbery**

Includes unarmed robbery victim over 65.

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**Sentence Type****Aggregate**

Multiple sentences received for more than one offense. These sentences will be served consecutively. The sentence length reported reflects the total of all sentences.

**Concurrent**

Multiple sentences received for more than one offense. These sentences will be served simultaneously.

**Fine**

Incarceration resulting from non-payment of a fine for one or more offenses.

**Forthwith**

A sentence that is to be served effective immediately, regardless of other sentences for which the individual is currently serving.

**From and After**

A sentence to be served following release from a previous sentence.

**Simple**

One sentence received for a single offense.

**Split**

A sentence that is divided between a specified period of incarceration followed by probation supervision. Split sentences to the State Prison have been eliminated due to the 'truth in sentencing' law for offenses committed after June 30, 1994.