

Massachusetts Department of Correction
Thomas A. Turco III, Commissioner

THREE YEAR RECIDIVISM RATES: 2012 RELEASE COHORT

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INTRODUCTION

Data presented herein represents recidivism statistics and administrative data for 2,346 criminally sentenced inmates released to the community from the Massachusetts Department of Correction (MA DOC) during calendar year 2012 via expiration of sentence or parole to the community. Each release during the year is counted, making it possible for one inmate to be included multiple times¹. The MA DOC defines a recidivist as any criminally sentenced inmate released to the community from MA DOC jurisdiction who is re-incarcerated in a Massachusetts state or county facility or to a federal facility for a criminal sentence within three years of their release to the community. The data presented includes information on inmate demographics, governing offense, release type, and sentence information.

METHODOLOGY

Information for this brief was gathered from the MA DOC Inmate Management System (IMS) and the Massachusetts Board of Probation (BOP). Data is based off information available at the time of collection and is subject to change. The criminal activity of inmates released to the community during 2012 was tracked through the Massachusetts Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) to determine any re-incarceration within three years of the inmate's release to the community. An inmate can be re-incarcerated in one of the following ways: technical violation of parole, violation of parole with a new offense, new court commitment to a Massachusetts county, state or a federal facility, technical violation of probation, or probation violation with a new offense.

OVERVIEW OF 2012 RELEASE TO THE COMMUNITY POPULATION

Demographics

- Of the 2,346 released inmates, 1,777 (76%) were male and 569 (24%) were female.
- Twenty-four percent of the inmates were paroled to the community (n = 552), while 1,794 (76%) were released via expiration of sentence.
- The largest number of releases were Caucasian (n = 1,144) followed by Hispanic (n = 597) and African American/Black (n = 547). The remaining releases reported races of Asian, Native American/Alaskan Native, and Other (n = 58).
- The mean age at time of initial commitment to the MA DOC for this cohort of inmates was 33.2 years old.
- Female inmates were slightly older than males at time of commitment, 34.2 and 32.9 years old, respectively.
- The mean age of inmates at time of release was 36.5 years old.
- Male inmates were slightly older than females at time of release, 36.9 years of age and 35.2 years of age, respectively, due to males generally having longer sentences.
- Of the 2,346 released inmates, 2,098 were screened upon admission for risk to recidivate. Seventy-five percent of the inmates were determined to be moderate or high risk based on the general and violence risk scale compared to 25% who scored low.

¹ In 2012, there were 46 inmates who had two releases on the same commitment number within the calendar year.

Offense Data

- Thirty-nine percent of the male inmates were serving a governing person offense, followed by drug offense (33%), property offense (11%), ‘other’ offense (10%) and sex offense (6%).
- Thirty-two percent of the female releases were serving a governing property offense, followed by ‘other’ offense (26%), person offense (23%), drug offense (18%), and sex offense (1%).
- Fifty-four percent of governing drug offenses carried a mandatory minimum term; 58% of the male governing drug offenses and 27% of the female governing drug offenses had a sentence with a mandatory minimum. This is an increase compared to prior years (47% in 2011) likely due to the Crime Bill enacted in August 2012 which resulted in the immediate release of a number of inmates serving mandatory minimum drug offenses.

Sentencing Data

- The average length of incarceration² for all releases was 37.9 months.
- The average length of incarceration for males was 46.3 months, compared to 11.6 months for females. This number differs significantly because of the amount of females that serve a county sentence within the Massachusetts Department of Correction.
- The majority of the males (61%) were released from a higher security facility; 547 from a medium security facility and 14% from a maximum security facility. The remaining 39% of the males were released from a lower security facility (minimum or pre-release).
- The majority of the females were released from a medium security facility (66%) while 34% were released from a lower security facility. There is no maximum security facility for female inmates in the MA DOC.

TECHNICAL VIOLATIONS³

A recidivist is defined as any criminally sentenced inmate released to the community from the MA DOC during 2012 who is re-incarcerated for a new sentence or violation of parole or probation to a Massachusetts state, county or federal facility within three years of his/her release. Types of re-incarceration include a technical violation of parole, parole violation with a new offense, return to county custody, return to state or federal custody, technical violation of probation, and probation violation with a new offense. An inmate, who is re-incarcerated due to a technical violation of parole or probation, is re-incarcerated for violating the terms of the conditions set forth regarding their release in the community, not for committing a new offense. A non-technical return would include a parole or probation violation with a new offense, or a new court commitment to a facility. When reporting on the recidivism rates for inmates released on parole, it is important to note that a portion of the paroled inmates re-incarcerated within the three-year period are no longer under parole supervision at the time they recidivate.

Tables 1 and 2 provide a comparison of the recidivism rates of inmates released during 2012, including and excluding re-incarcerations for technical violations. In order to calculate the recidivism rate excluding technical violations of parole or probation, the inmate’s first non-technical re-incarceration within three years of their release was used. *Please note: inmates who were returned for a technical violation were incarcerated for a period of time during the three-year follow up period, diminishing the likelihood of a non-technical return.*

² Length of incarceration is defined as the number of days between the inmate’s most recent incarceration and their release to the community. This includes new court commitments, county inmates sentenced from the court to serve a county sentence in a state facility, parole violations, and probation violations on their current incarceration.

³ Inmates released on parole and/or probation are supervised in the community upon release and can be re-incarcerated for violating the terms of their supervision.

Three-Year Recidivism Rates Including and Excluding Re-Incarcerations for Technical Violations by Type of Release and Gender

Table 1:

Recidivism Rates by Release Type and Gender - <u>Excluding</u> Technical Violations of Parole or Probation									
	Males			Females			Total		
Release Type	Number Releases	Rec	Rate	Number Releases	Rec	Rate	Number Releases	Rec	Rate
Parole To Street	414	83	20%	138	22	16%	552	105	19%
Expiration of Sentence	1,363	420	31%	431	112	26%	1,794	532	30%
Total Releases	1,777	503	28%	569	134	24%	2,346	637	27%
Recidivism Rates by Release Type and Gender - <u>Including</u> Technical Violations of Parole or Probation									
	Males			Females			Total		
Release Type	Number Releases	Rec	Rate	Number Releases	Rec	Rate	Number Releases	Rec	Rate
Parole To Street	414	164	40%	138	50	36%	552	214	39%
Expiration of Sentence	1,363	422	31%	431	117	27%	1,794	539	30%
Total Releases	1,777	586	33%	569	167	29%	2,346	753	32%

Inmates released to the community with parole conditions are supervised for a period of time while in the community. Paroled inmates who do not adhere to the conditions of their release can have their parole revoked and can be re-incarcerated. A parole revocation can result from a technical violation of the terms of release, or can result from the arraignment for a new crime. By virtue of being under supervision in the community an inmate may have a higher likelihood of re-incarceration.

- Of the 2,346 inmates released to the community during 2012, 552 (24%) were paroled to the community while 1,794 (76%) were released via expiration of sentence. Inmates paroled to the community had a significantly⁴ higher recidivism rate (39%) than the recidivism rate of inmates released expiration of sentence (30%). The role of supervision to prevent future criminality suggests a reason for higher rates for paroled inmates with a large portion of re-incarcerations occurring as a result of a technical violation of parole conditions.
- Of the 753 inmates who were recidivists using the definition including technical violations, 157 were re-incarcerated for a technical parole or probation violation. One hundred and forty-seven were technical parole violations and 10 were technical violations of probation.
- Of the 157 inmates who returned for a technical violation, 41 of them had another return within the three-year period that was used when determining the recidivism rate excluding technical violations.
- Overall, the recidivism rate decreased by five percentage points, from 32% to 27% when excluding technical violations, with inmates being paroled to the community experiencing the largest decrease from 39% to 19%. The recidivism rate for female inmates decreased from a rate of 29% to a rate of 24%. The male recidivism rate, decreased from 33% to 28% when excluding technical violations.

⁴ Pearson's Chi-Square test was used to determine statistical significance ($p \leq 0.05$).

Recidivism Rates Including and Excluding Re-Incarcerations for Technical Violations by Year of Re-Incarceration and Gender

Table 2:

Three Year Re-Incarceration Recidivism Rates <u>Excluding</u> Technical Violations									
		1st Year		2nd Year		3rd Year		Total	
Gender	Number of Releases	Rec	Rate	Rec	Rate	Rec	Rate	Rec	Rate
Female	569	68	12%	40	7%	26	5%	134	24%
Male	1,777	208	12%	179	10%	116	6%	503	28%
Total	2,346	276	12%	219	9%	152	6%	637	27%
Three Year Re-Incarceration Recidivism Rates <u>Including</u> Technical Violations									
		1st Year		2nd Year		3rd Year		Total	
Gender	Number of Releases	Rec	Rate	Rec	Rate	Rec	Rate	Rec	Rate
Female	569	103	18%	41	7%	23	4%	167	29%
Male	1,777	308	17%	170	10%	108	6%	586	33%
Total	2,346	411	18%	211	9%	131	6%	753	32%

- The majority of technical violations occurred within the first year of release.
- When excluding technical violators, the recidivism rate was 12% during the first year of the follow-up period, compared to a rate of 18% when technical violations were included.
- For both the second and third years in the follow-up period, the recidivism rate remained the same when excluding technical violations, 9% and 6% respectively.

Release Statistics

Three-Year Recidivism Rates by Post Release Supervision

Table 3:

	Males		Females		Total	
Supervision Type	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
Parole Only	254	39%	83	34%	337	37%
Probation Only	641	37%	161	30%	802	36%
Both Parole and Probation	160	41%	55	40%	216	40%
No Supervision	722	25%	270	25%	992	25%
Total Releases	1,777	33%	569	29%	2,346	32%

- Of the 2,346 inmates being released to the community, those being released with both parole and probation supervision had the highest recidivism rate (40%), followed by those released with parole only (37%) and those released with probation only (36%). Those being released with no supervision had the lowest recidivism rate (25%).
- When examining male and female releases individually, both mirrored the overall recidivism rates by post release supervision, although the overall rate was heavily influenced by the males. Males under both parole and probation supervision had the highest recidivism rate (41%), as did female releases at 40%. Both males and females who were under parole supervision only had the second highest recidivism rates, 39% and 34% respectively. Males under only probation supervision had a recidivism rate of 37%, compared to a rate of 30% for females.

- Both males and females recidivated at 25% when released without any supervision.

Three-Year Recidivism Rates by Security Level of Releasing Institution and Gender

Table 5:

	Males		Females		Total	
Security Level	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
Maximum	246	50%	n.a ⁵	n.a	246	50%
Medium	836	35%	374	32%	1,210	34%
Lower	695	25%	195	24%	890	25%
Total Releases	1,777	33%	569	29%	2,346	32%

- Recidivism rates for inmates released during 2012 were positively correlated with the security level of the inmates releasing facility. The recidivism rate for inmates increased as the security level of the releasing institution increased.
- Male inmates release from lower⁶ security had the lowest recidivism rate, with 25% of those inmates re-incarcerated within three-years of their release to the community.
- The recidivism rate for males released from medium security was 35%, while the rate for males released from maximum security was 50%, the highest of all security level designations.
- The recidivism rate for female inmates released from a lower security facility was 24%, whereas females who were released from a medium security facility had a recidivism rate of 32%.
- For both male and female releases the difference in recidivism rates for security level was found to be statistically significant.

Three-Year Recidivism for Females by Sentencing Type⁷

Table 6:

Three Year Recidivism Rate Female 2012 Releases to the Community by Sentence Type		
Sentence Type	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
State Sentence	95	21%
County Sentence	474	31%
Total Releases	569	29%

Female inmates sentenced from the court to serve a county sentence often serve that sentence in a state correctional facility due to limited female bed space at the county level. County sentenced females comprised 83% of the criminally sentenced female releases from the MA DOC included in the 2012 recidivism cohort. They had a significantly higher recidivism rate (31%) compared to those releasing from a state sentence (21%). County sentenced females differ from state sentenced females in a number of ways that could attribute to a higher recidivism rate for these inmates. Despite the higher number of releases, the county female inmates in this cohort were less likely than state sentenced females to transition to a lower security facility prior to release, with 29% of county sentenced females and 59% of state sentenced females released from a minimum or pre-release facility, likely due to their shorter stay.

⁵ There is no maximum security facility for female inmates in the MA DOC.

⁶ Lower security includes minimum, pre-release, contract pre-release facilities and Electronic Monitoring (ELMO).

⁷ Due to the minimal number of county correctional facilities that house female inmates, many females released during 2012 who received a county sentence from the court served that sentence at the MA DOC.

The governing offense category for these two groups also differs, with 36% of the county sentenced female inmates incarcerated for a governing property offense, compared to 10% of the state sentenced female inmates. Property offenders are often found to have higher recidivism rates than inmates sentenced for other offense categories. County sentenced inmates also had a smaller difference in average age at commitment (less than a year) versus at release compared to state sentenced inmates. This is due to the disparity in sentence lengths between state sentenced and county sentenced inmates, with state sentenced inmates receiving more severe sentencing for more serious offenses. Though county sentenced females do receive programming during these shorter stays, the opportunity becomes more limited compared to their state sentenced counterparts due to the minimal amount of time in the MA DOC.

Three-Year Recidivism Rates by Release Address: Massachusetts Counties⁸

Table 7:

Releasing County	Male		Female		Total	
	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
Bristol County	143	43%	32	28%	175	41%
Middlesex County	231	42%	117	26%	348	37%
Worcester County	186	36%	31	42%	217	36%
Suffolk County	387	32%	73	40%	460	33%
Barnstable County	42	43%	12	n.a.	54	33%
Essex County	204	31%	125	34%	329	32%
Plymouth County	105	31%	78	31%	183	31%
Berkshire County	22	32%	5	n.a.	27	30%
Hampden County	268	30%	17	n.a.	285	29%
Franklin County	20	30%	1	n.a.	21	29%
Norfolk County	67	28%	60	22%	127	25%
Hampshire County	17	n.a.	1	n.a.	18	n.a.
Out of State	85	8%	16	n.a.	101	9%
Unknown	0	n.a.	1	n.a.	1	n.a.
Total Releases	1,777	33%	569	29%	2,346	32%

- Of the 2,346 releases in 2012, 96% (n = 2,244) had a self-reported release address in Massachusetts.
- Though they did not have the highest number of recidivists, the counties with the highest recidivism rates overall were Bristol County (41%), Middlesex County (37%) and Worcester County (36%).
- The highest recidivism rates for males based on the county the inmate was released to were Bristol and Barnstable Counties (43% each), followed by Middlesex County (42%) and Worcester County (36%). The male recidivism rate by county of release follows closely to the overall recidivism rates due to the higher proportion of male releases within each county.
- The highest recidivism rates for female releases were released to Worcester County (42%), followed by Suffolk County (40%) and Essex County (34%). These figures are impacted by the high number of female county sentenced inmates released from DOC facilities (83%), particularly those sentenced out of those counties.

⁸ For releases where the numeric value was less than 20, recidivism rates were not reported in the table.

- The lower recidivism rate for those reporting a release address outside of Massachusetts is likely attributable to the fact that obtaining re-incarceration data for courts outside of Massachusetts is limited and in some cases unavailable.

Demographic Statistics

Three-Year Recidivism Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

Table 8:

	Males		Females		Total	
Race/Ethnicity	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
Caucasian	713	35%	431	30%	1,144	33%
African American/Black	482	34%	65	26%	547	33%
Hispanic	564	31%	33	33%	597	31%
Other	2	n.a.	35	23%	37	24%
Asian	8	n.a.	4	n.a.	12	n.a.
Native American/Alaskan Native	8	n.a.	1	n.a.	9	n.a.
Total Releases	1,777	33%	569	29%	2,346	32%

- Within three years of their release to the community, male inmates who reported a race of Caucasian inmates had the highest recidivism rate (35%), followed by African American/ Black (34%) and Hispanic (31%).
- Of the 569 female releases, inmates who reported a race/ethnicity of Hispanic had the highest recidivism rate (33%), followed by Caucasian (30%) and African American/ Black (26%).

Three-Year Recidivism Rates by Age at Release and Gender

Table 9:

	Male		Female		Total	
Age	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
18 - 24	187	43%	96	29%	283	39%
25 - 29	337	40%	113	27%	450	37%
30 - 34	367	36%	90	36%	457	36%
35 - 39	228	29%	70	37%	298	31%
40 - 44	220	31%	85	34%	305	32%
45 - 49	195	28%	60	25%	255	27%
50 - 54	119	28%	36	24%	155	20%
55 - 59	66	23%	12	n.a.	78	23%
60 or older	58	9%	7	n.a.	65	8%
Total Releases	1,777	33%	569	29%	2,346	32%

- The age of inmates at time of release from the MA DOC ranged from 18 to 80 years old.
- Male inmates between 18-34 years at time of release had a recidivism rate of 39%, while 27% of males 35 years of age or older at release recidivated within three years of their release to the community.
- The disparity in recidivism rates for male inmates by age is most apparent when comparing the youngest and oldest inmates. Male inmates younger than 25 years of age at release had a

recidivism rate of 42%, while the recidivism rate for male inmates age 50 or older was less than half the rate for the youngest inmates (20%).

- Female releases between 18-34 years of age had a recidivism rate of 30%, compared to a rate of 28% for females 35 years of age or older. There was a considerably smaller disparity compared to their male counterparts for the same age group comparisons.
- These findings remain consistent with research that older inmates are less likely to recidivate.
- Recidivism rates of the inmates released during 2012 by age at release were statistically significant particularly when examining those under the age of 35 at release versus those 35 years of age and older.

Offense Statistics

Three-Year Recidivism Rates by Offense Category and Gender

Table 10:

	Males		Females		Total	
Offense Category	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
Property	190	52%	181	34%	371	43%
Person	701	40%	130	32%	831	39%
Other	183	34%	150	25%	333	30%
Drug	592	22%	103	24%	695	22%
Sex	111	16%	5	n.a.	116	16%
Total Releases	1,777	33%	569	29%	2,346	32%

- Property offenders had the highest recidivism rate of all offense types for both male and female releases, 52% and 34% respectively.
- The second highest recidivism rate for male releases was person offenders who recidivated at a rate of 40%. Similarly, the second highest rate for female releases was also person offenders with a recidivism rate of 32%.
- The proportion of property offenders and drug offenders saw a shift compared to the previous year's cohort which may have had an impact on the overall recidivism rate. Property offenders who have historically had the highest recidivism rate accounted for 16% of releases compared to 19% in 2011. Drug offenders, who tend to have a lower recidivism rate, accounted for 30% of releases compared to 28% in 2011. This was due to the enactment of the Crime Bill which resulted in the immediate release of dozens of inmates serving a mandatory minimum drug sentence.
- The difference in recidivists and non-recidivists groups was found to be significant when broken out by offense type for the total release cohort.

Three-Year Recidivism Rates by Violent Offense and Gender

Table 11:

	Males		Females		Total	
Offense Type	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
Violent	812	37%	135	32%	947	36%
Non-Violent	965	30%	434	29%	1,399	30%
Total Releases	1,777	33%	569	29%	2,346	32%

- Non-violent offenders released during 2012 had a recidivism rate of 30% compared to a rate of 36% for those with a governing violent offense. This difference in recidivism rates was driven by the number of male releases who nearly mirrored the overall rates.
- For female releases, the recidivism rate was closer when comparing violent to non-violent offenders.

Three-Year Recidivism Rates by Mandatory Minimum Drug Offense and Gender

Table 12:

	Males		Females		Total	
Offense Type	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
Non-Mandatory	247	24%	75	31%	322	25%
Mandatory	345	20%	28	7%	373	19%
Total Releases	592	22%	103	24%	695	22%

- There was an increase in releases of inmates serving a governing drug offense due to the enactment of the Crime Bill in August 2012, particularly those serving a mandatory minimum drug sentence, as evidenced in the table above. The majority of drug offenders released were serving a mandatory minimum.
- Those serving a mandatory minimum recidivated at a rate of 19% compared to those who served a non-mandatory minimum drug offense at 25%.

Three-Year Recidivism Rates by Risk Score and Gender

Table 13:

	Males		Females		Total	
Risk Score	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
Moderate or High	1,304	39%	271	34%	1,575	39%
Low	408	12%	115	17%	523	13%
Total Releases	1,712	33%	386	29%	2,098	32%

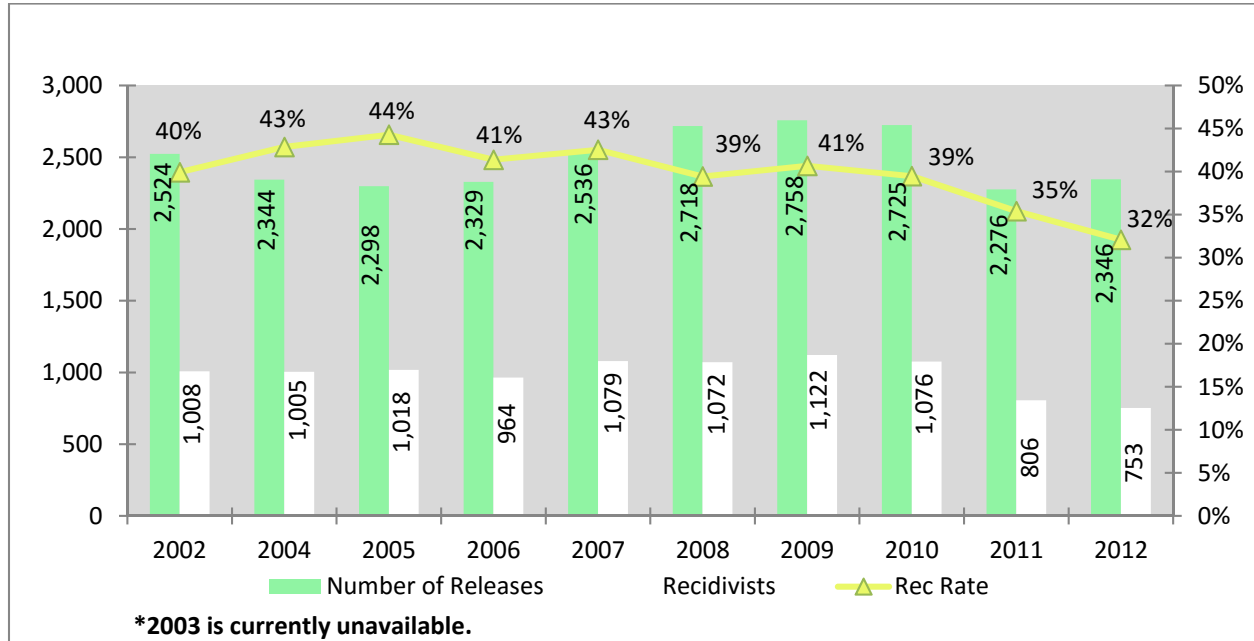
- There were 248 inmates who did not receive the COMPAS risk assessment⁹ and therefore were not included in the analysis of recidivism risk scores. The recidivism rate by risk level was found to be significant for males, females and the overall release cohort.
- Those deemed moderate or high risk to recidivate recidivated at a rate of 39% compared to a rate of 13% for those assessed as low risk. This heavily influenced the overall recidivism rate as the vast majority of inmates were moderate or high risk.
- The male recidivism rate was nearly identical to the overall rate as they made up most of the cohort with those deemed moderate or high risk recidivating at 39% compared to 12% for low risk inmates.

⁹ Some of the reasons why an inmate may not be assessed included serving less than a 90 day sentence (largely females serving county sentences) or due to the timing of the assessment being rolled out to facilities.

- Females assessed as moderate or high risk recidivated at 34%, while those assessed as low risk had a recidivism rate of 17%.

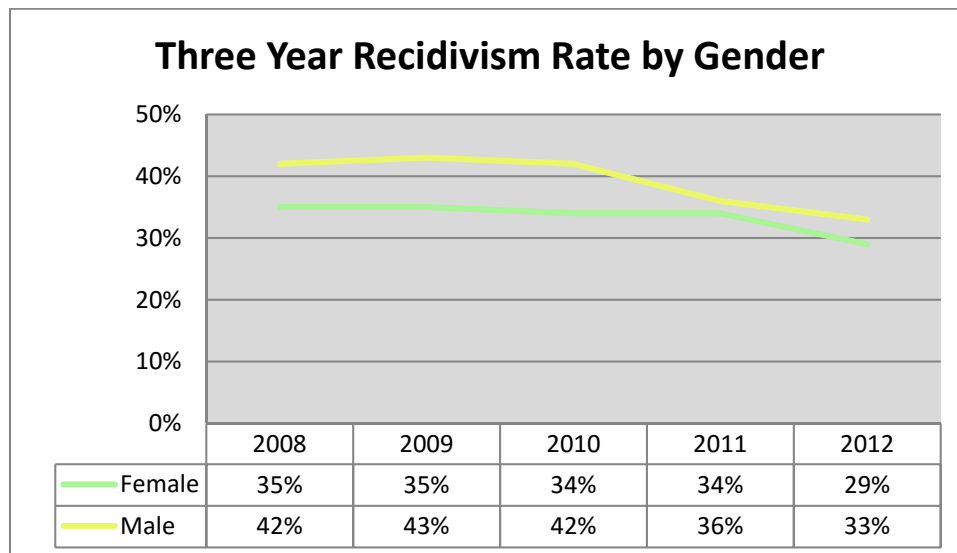
Recidivism Trends 2002-2012

Figure 1:



The recidivism rate experienced an upward trend between 2002 and 2007, with a low of 40% and high of 44%. After this period of increase, the recidivism rate for the 2008 release cohort decreased by 4 percentage points compared to the previous year, resulting in a 39% recidivism rate. This rate then increased by 2 percentage points to 41% in 2009 before experiencing a downward trend starting in 2010, ultimately 32% in 2012. The notable decrease in 2011 is likely due to the lower number of parole releases that year as well as reentry efforts, including enhancements and improvement to inmate case planning and a variety of programs offered in MA DOC facilities. This carried over with the 2012 release cohort. The three percentage point decrease is also partially attributed to the increase in releases of non-violent offenders compared to the previous year, namely ‘other’ and drug offenders, who tend to have lower recidivism rates.

Figure 2:



The male recidivism rate hovered between 42% and 43% between 2002 and 2010 before dipping six percentage points to 36% in 2011. This was largely due to a decrease in number of male parole releases. The rate would decline again in 2012 by three percentage points, resulting in a male recidivism rate of 33%. This was in part to the increased number of male drug offenders released in 2012 which drove the lower recidivism rate. The female recidivism rate remained between 35% and 34% between 2008 and 2011 before decreasing five percentage points in 2012 to a low of 29%. This was largely driven by a large decrease in recidivism rates amongst female releases who were serving time for an 'other' offense – a 25% recidivism rate in 2012 compared to 38% in 2011.

CONCLUSION

This brief provides detailed statistical data for the 2012 release cohort, a glance at the ongoing recidivism data collection. After a spike in 2007, the 3 year recidivism rate had stabilized over the past three years reported (2008-2010) ranging between 39% and 41% prior to dropping to 35% for the 2011 release cohort. This notable decrease is due in large part to a drop in parole release rates for that year. Change in the Massachusetts Parole Board in 2011, as well as change in culture and media, accounted for the large decrease in parolees starting in that release year. The recidivism rate would then drop again to 32% in 2012, a decrease of three percentage points. Though the changes in the Massachusetts Parole Board still had an influence in this release year, the enactment of the Crime Bill in August 2012 resulted in the immediate release of several mandatory minimum drug offenders which also potentially played a role in lower recidivism rates. Past analyses have shown that drug offenders as a whole recidivated at a lower rate than most other types of offenders – this is also especially true of mandatory minimum drug offenders who tend to serve longer sentences.

In addition to the Crime Bill, issues regarding the accuracy of testing at the Hinton Drug Lab resulted in nearly 300 releases by court orders during the months of September through December of 2012. These releases were not included in this cohort as they were released by court order and thus may not have had the opportunity to participate in reentry programming that was made available to those who released to the community via parole or expiration of sentence. Many of these inmates, however, would have likely been included in our recidivism cohorts for 2012 and future years.

As mentioned, increased reentry efforts and focus on case management for inmates also could have impacted those released in 2012. The move towards more evidence-based practices and cost-benefit analyses for programs will be reflected in future release cohorts as the strive for lower recidivism rates continues to be a major objective at the MA DOC. Descriptive reports have been conducted and can be found on the Department's website that look at correlations between recidivism and the Department's largest substance abuse treatment program (Correctional Recovery Academy).

Though the information gathered can be used to supplement policies and procedures in place in the criminal justice field, it is important to note that additional research would be useful in implementing evidence-based practices. Recidivism data collection based on programming, education, work release and the like would further examine the continued efforts in the corrections field and would allow for best practices to be utilized.

Definitions	
County Sentence	<p>Prior to the “Truth in Sentencing” law, if an inmate is sentenced to the House of Correction, the term shall be two and a half years or less. Parole eligibility and discharge are based on the maximum term of a sentence.</p> <p>Under the “new” law (enacted in 1994), discharge on this sentence will change because of the elimination of statutory good time. There is no change in the parole eligibility date.</p>
Crime Bill	Enacted on August 2, 2012, and resulted in an immediate change to sentence structure of dozens of inmates. See Chapter 192 of the Acts of 2012.
Governing Offense	The governing offense is the offense associated with the longest maximum release date.
Length of Incarceration	Length of incarceration represents the number of days between the inmate’s most recent incarceration which represents a new court commitment including county inmates sentenced from the court to serve a county sentence, parole violation, and probation violation on their current incarceration and their release to the community.
Lower Security	Lower security includes minimum, pre-release, and contract pre-release facilities.
Mandatory Drug Offenders	Inmates serving a governing drug sentence that carries a mandatory minimum term.
Offense Category	Offense categories include Person, Property, Sex, Drug, and Other. Offense categories represent the inmate’s governing offense.
Race/Ethnicity	The race categories self reported and used in this report include: Caucasian, African American/Black, Asian, Hawaiian-Pacific Islander, and American Indian-Alaska Native. Inmates who report a Hispanic ethnicity are reported as Hispanic in this race category.
Recidivism Rate	Number of inmates re-incarcerated within three years of their release to the community divided by the number of inmates released.
State Prison Sentence	<p>Prior to the “Truth in Sentencing” law, if an inmate is sentenced to the State Prison, except for life or as a habitual criminal, the court shall not fix the term of imprisonment, but shall fix a maximum and minimum term for which he/she may be imprisoned. The minimum term shall not be less than two and a half years. All sentences that have a finite maximum term are eligible to have the term reduced by statutory good time, except for most sex offenses, crimes committed while confined and certain “mandatory” sentences.</p> <p>In the “new law”, all state sentences have a minimum and a maximum term, unless an inmate is sentenced for life or is charged as a habitual criminal. The minimum term is used to determine parole eligibility, and the maximum term is used to determine discharge.</p> <p>Under both the “old” and “new” sentencing systems, an inmate is discharged from his/her sentence at the expiration of his term, less any statutory or earned good time. Under the “new” system none of the reduction will be attributable to statutory good time.</p>
Recidivism Risk Score	On intake to the prison system, each inmate is given assessments to establish his/her Intake/Criminal History/Risk Scale Set. Components of the scale set are the General and Violent Recidivism Risk Scores which may be used to predict recidivism risk. The risk scores are based on a COMPAS Core scale (an automated risk need assessment tool). The amount of programming required for a given inmate is established based on a simplified scale of Low, Moderate or High recidivism risk inmates. The inmate’s most recent risk assessment data was used prior to his/her release to the community.
Violent/Non-Violent Offense	Person and Sex offenses are combined into the category ‘Violent Offenses’. Property, Drug, and ‘Other’ offenses are categorized into ‘Non-Violent’ offenses.

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