

THREE YEAR RECIDIVISM RATES: 2013 RELEASE COHORT

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INTRODUCTION

Data presented herein represents recidivism statistics and administrative data for 2,518 criminally sentenced inmates released to the community from the Massachusetts Department of Correction (MA DOC) during calendar year 2013 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 derived from information available at the time of collection and is subject to change. The criminal activity of inmates released to the community during 2013 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. It is important to note that an inmate may be dropped from the study for one of various reasons, including not having been released directly to the community upon further examination or death prior to the close of the follow-up period.

OVERVIEW OF 2013 RELEASE TO THE COMMUNITY POPULATION

Demographics

- Of the 2,518 released inmates, 1,958 (78%) were male and 560 (22%) were female.
- Twenty-eight percent of the inmates were paroled to the community (n=706), while 72% (n=1,812) were released via expiration of sentence.
- The largest number of releases were Caucasian/White (n=1,278) followed by African American/Black (n=598) and Hispanic (n=585). The remaining releases reported races of Asian, Native American/Alaskan Native, and Other (n=57).
- The average age at time of initial commitment to the MA DOC for this cohort of inmates was 33 years old.
- Female inmates were slightly older than males at time of commitment, 34 and 33 years old, respectively.
- The average age of inmates at time of release was 37 years old.
- Male inmates were slightly older than females at time of release, 37 years of age and 35 years of age respectively, due to males generally having longer sentences.
- Of the 2,518 released inmates, 2,297 were screened for risk to recidivate. Fifty-four percent of those inmates were determined to be high risk based on the general and/or violence risk scale, followed by low risk (25%) and moderate risk (21%).

¹ In 2013, there were 53 inmates who had multiple releases on the same commitment number within the calendar year.

- Thirty percent (n=753) were identified as having an open mental health case prior to release. Twenty percent of males released had an open mental health case compared to 62% of females. The majority of releases were male thus driving the overall percentage for the release cohort.

Offense/Sentencing Data

- Forty-two percent of the male inmates were serving a governing person offense, followed by drug offense (28%), ‘other’ offense (12%), property offense (11%) and sex offense (8%).
- Thirty-four percent of the female releases were serving a governing property offense, followed by ‘other’ offense (24%), person offense (23%), drug offense (18%), and sex offense (1%).
- Fifty-five percent of governing drug offenses carried a mandatory minimum term; 60% of the male governing drug offenses and 23% of the female governing drug offenses had a sentence with a mandatory minimum. This is an increase compared to previously reported years likely due to the Crime Bill enacted in August 2012 which resulted in the immediate change in sentence structure of numerous inmates serving mandatory minimum drug offenses.
- The majority of the males (60%) were released from a higher security facility; 928 inmates from a medium security facility and 256 inmates from a maximum security facility. The remaining 40% 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 (63%) while 37% were released from a lower security facility. There is no maximum security facility for female inmates in the MA DOC.

TECHNICAL VIOLATIONS²

A recidivist is defined as any criminally sentenced inmate released to the community from the MA DOC during 2013 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 a new arraignment. A non-technical return would include a parole or probation violation resulting from a new arraignment. 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. When reporting on the recidivism rates for inmates released on probation, it is important to note that an inmate is only deemed a probation violator if they are released from a split sentence; probation violators are mainly county sentenced, thus there are a small number of inmates who can recidivate as a probation violator using that definition. Those who release with a probation term (not a split sentence) and are re-incarcerated are considered new commitments.

Tables 1 and 2, on the following page, provide a comparison of the recidivism rates of inmates released during 2013, 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 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 as a technical violator.

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 Community	550	91	17%	156	26	17%	706	117	17%
Expiration of Sentence	1,408	430	31%	404	124	31%	1,812	554	31%
Total Releases	1,958	521	27%	560	150	27%	2,518	671	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 Community	550	186	34%	156	57	37%	706	243	34%
Expiration of Sentence	1,408	432	31%	404	127	31%	1,812	559	31%
Total Releases	1,958	618	32%	560	184	33%	2,518	802	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 2,518 inmates released to the community during 2013, 706 (28%) were paroled to the community while 1,812 (72%) were released via expiration of sentence. Inmates paroled to the community had a higher recidivism rate (34%) than the recidivism rate of inmates released due to an expiration of sentence (31%). 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 802 inmates who were recidivists using the definition including technical violations, 174 were re-incarcerated for a technical parole or probation violation. One hundred and sixty-six were technical parole violations and 8 were technical violations of probation.
- Of the 174 inmates who returned for a technical violation, 43 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 a large decrease from 34% to 17%. For those released via expiration of sentence, the recidivism rate remained the same regardless of exclusion of technical violations (31%). The overall recidivism rate for female inmates decreased from a rate of 33% to a rate of 27%. The overall male recidivism rate, decreased from 32% to 27% when excluding technical violations.

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	560	71	13%	57	10%	22	4%	150	27%
Male	1,958	238	12%	173	9%	110	6%	521	27%
Total	2,518	309	12%	230	9%	132	5%	671	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	560	110	20%	56	10%	18	3%	184	33%
Male	1,958	350	18%	169	9%	99	5%	618	32%
Total	2,518	460	18%	225	9%	117	5%	802	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 5% respectively.

Release Statistics

Three Year Recidivism Rates by Post Release Supervision

Table 3:

Supervision Type	Males		Females		Total	
	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
Parole Only	347	33%	90	37%	437	33%
Probation Only	720	36%	151	35%	871	36%
Parole and Probation	203	36%	66	36%	269	36%
No Supervision	688	26%	253	29%	941	27%
Total Releases	1,958	32%	560	33%	2,518	32%

- Of the 2,518 inmates being released to the community, those being released with probation only or both parole and probation supervision had the highest recidivism rates (36%), followed by those released with parole only (33%). Those being released with no supervision had the lowest recidivism rate (27%).
- In previous release cohorts, those being released with parole supervision only have consistently recidivated at a higher rate than those released with only probation. In 2013, the latter recidivated at a rate of 36%, 3 percentage points higher than those with parole supervision only. This was largely driven by the male recidivism rates which mirrored the total recidivism rates.
- When examining male and female releases individually, male recidivism rates were identical to the overall recidivism rates in regards to all supervision types, except for those released with no

supervision where the difference was only one percentage point. Females, on the other hand, varied compared to the overall rates by supervision type, namely those released with parole supervision only; thirty-seven percent recidivated within three years of release, four percentage points higher than the male rate and total rate.

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

Table 5:

Security Level	Males		Females		Total	
	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
Maximum	256	52%	n.a ³	n.a	256	52%
Medium	928	33%	352	36%	1,280	34%
Lower	774	23%	208	28%	982	24%
Total Releases	1,958	32%	560	33%	2,518	32%

- Recidivism rates for inmates released during 2013 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.
- The highest recidivism rate for males based on releasing security level was for those released from a maximum security facility (52%), followed by medium security (33%) and lower⁴ security (23%).
- The recidivism rate for female inmates released from a medium security facility was 36%, compared to 28% from a lower security facility.

Three Year Recidivism for Females by Sentencing Type⁵

Table 6:

Three Year Recidivism Rate Female 2013 Releases to the Community by Sentence Type		
Sentence Type	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
County Sentence	461	34%
State Sentence	98	29%
Total Releases	559	33%

*Note: There was one female serving an out of state sentence in this release cohort who was not included in this analysis.

Females 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 82% of the criminally sentenced female releases from the MA DOC included in the 2013 recidivism cohort. They had a considerably higher recidivism rate (34%) compared to those releasing from a state sentence (29%). County sentenced females differ from state sentenced females in a number of ways that could attribute to a higher recidivism rate for these inmates, including a higher likelihood for limited re-entry programming and diminished opportunity to transition to lower security due to the shorter length of sentence. Having said that, 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 34% of county sentenced

³ There is no maximum security facility for female inmates in the MA DOC.

⁴ Lower security includes minimum, pre-release, contract pre-release facilities and Electronic Monitoring (ELMO).

⁵ Due to the minimal number of county correctional facilities that house female inmates, many females released during 2013 who received a county sentence from the court served that sentence at the MA DOC.

females and 53% of state sentenced females releasing from a minimum or pre-release facility. The governing offense category for these two groups also differs with the largest number of releases of county sentenced female inmates released were incarcerated for a governing property offense, compared to the largest number of state sentenced female inmates who were serving a governing person offense. 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. This difference in sentencing structure is also evident when comparing the type of release of county sentenced females versus state sentenced females; nearly half (45%) of state sentenced females were released via parole to the community as opposed to an expiration of their sentence compared to only 24% of county sentenced females.

Three Year Recidivism Rates by Release Address: Massachusetts Counties⁶

Table 7:

Releasing County	Male		Female		Total	
	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
Franklin County	28	46%	2	n.a.	30	47%
Plymouth County	109	40%	70	37%	179	39%
Berkshire County	38	37%	1	n.a.	39	36%
Worcester County	243	33%	34	47%	277	35%
Bristol County	183	34%	29	41%	212	35%
Middlesex County	211	35%	135	29%	346	32%
Hampden County	252	33%	8	n.a.	260	32%
Barnstable County	33	30%	8	n.a.	41	32%
Suffolk County	447	30%	72	39%	519	31%
Norfolk County	82	33%	52	29%	134	31%
Essex County	200	27%	123	33%	323	29%
Hampshire County	10	n.a.	2	n.a.	12	n.a.
Dukes County	1	n.a.	1	n.a.	2	n.a.
Nantucket County	1	n.a.	0	n.a.	1	n.a.
Out of State ⁷	118	14%	22	9%	140	13%
Unknown	2	n.a.	1	n.a.	3	n.a.
Total Releases	1,958	32%	560	33%	2,518	32%

- Of the 2,518 releases in 2013, 94% (n=2,375) 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 Franklin County (47%), Plymouth County (39%) and Berkshire County (36%). Franklin and Berkshire Counties may have been skewed due to the smaller number of total releases. When looking at only counties that received 100 or more releases from MA DOC, the highest rates were those that reported a release address in Plymouth County (39%), followed by Worcester and Bristol Counties (both 35%).
- The highest recidivism rates for males based on the county the inmate was released to were Franklin County (46%), followed by Plymouth County (40%) and Berkshire County (37%), mirroring the overall recidivism rates.

⁶ For releases where the numeric value was less than 20, recidivism rates were not reported in the table.

⁷ Limitations regarding lack of available information for courts outside of Massachusetts skew the recidivism rate for those with a self-reported release address outside of Massachusetts.

- The highest recidivism rates for female releases were released to Worcester County (47%), followed by Bristol County (41%) and Suffolk County (39%). These rates may be skewed as a result of the smaller number of releases for females to those counties. The two Counties that had the largest number of release addresses for females were Middlesex and Essex, with recidivism rates of 29% and 33%, respectively.
- The lower recidivism rate for those reporting a release address outside of Massachusetts is very likely due to the vastly limited, and in nearly all cases unavailable, re-incarceration data obtainable for courts outside of Massachusetts.

Demographic Statistics

Three Year Recidivism Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

Table 8:

Race/Ethnicity	Males		Females		Total	
	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
Caucasian/White	835	32%	443	33%	1,278	33%
African American/Black	535	33%	63	30%	598	33%
Other	6	n.a.	28	32%	34	32%
Hispanic	561	29%	24	33%	585	29%
Asian	12	n.a.	2	n.a.	14	n.a.
Native American/Alaskan Native	9	n.a.	0	n.a.	9	n.a.
Total Releases	1,958	32%	560	33%	2,518	32%

- Within three years of their release to the community, male inmates who reported a race of African American/Black had the highest recidivism rate (33%), followed by Caucasian/White (32%) and Hispanic (29%).
- Of the 560 female releases, inmates who reported a race/ethnicity of Caucasian/White and Hispanic had the highest recidivism rates (33%), followed by Other (32%) and African American/Black (30%).
- The overall recidivism rate for those who reported a race of Other is skewed based on the significantly lower number of releases.

Three Year Recidivism Rates by Age at Release and Gender

Table 9:

Age	Male		Female		Total	
	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
18 - 24	205	47%	77	40%	282	45%
25 - 29	377	36%	121	39%	498	37%
30 - 34	383	34%	104	39%	487	35%
35 - 39	273	29%	68	27%	341	28%
40 - 44	248	31%	74	32%	322	31%
45 - 49	197	26%	53	25%	250	26%
50 - 54	141	23%	42	17%	183	22%
55 - 59	75	9%	13	n.a.	88	9%
60 or older	59	10%	8	n.a.	67	12%
Total Releases	1,958	32%	560	33%	2,518	32%

- The age of inmates at time of release from the MA DOC ranged from 18 to 86 years old.
- Male inmates between 18-34 years at time of release had a recidivism rate of 38%, while 26% of males 35 years of age or older 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 47%, while the recidivism rate for male inmates age 50 or older was considerably less than half the rate for the youngest inmates (17%).
- Female releases between 18-34 years of age had a recidivism rate of 39%, compared to a rate of 25% for females 35 years of age or older.
- Similar to their male counterparts, there is a substantial difference in recidivism rates for females when comparing those younger than 25 years of age and those 50 and older (40% and 16% respectively).
- These findings remain consistent with research that older inmates are less likely to recidivate.

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	219	43%	189	39%	408	41%
Person	813	37%	128	34%	941	37%
Other	232	36%	136	31%	368	34%
Drug	538	22%	101	21%	639	21%
Sex	156	15%	6	n.a.	162	17%
Total Releases	1,958	32%	560	33%	2,518	32%

- Property offenders had the highest recidivism rate of all offense types for both male and female releases, 43% and 39% respectively. This has been consistently the case in each release cohort dating back to 2002, with the exception of the 2011 release cohort.
- The second highest recidivism rate for male releases was person offenders who recidivated at a rate of 37%. Similarly, the second highest rate for female releases was also person offenders with a recidivism rate of 34%.
- Though the recidivism rates by offense category for females are consistently lower than males in each category, their overall recidivism rate was still slightly higher than males (33% compared to 32%). Property offenders, who had the highest recidivism rate regardless of gender, made up a much different proportion of the overall release cohort for males versus females. Males released in 2013 for a governing property offense made up only 11% of the total male release population, whereas females serving a governing property offense made up 34% of the total female release population. This disparity offers one possible explanation as to why females recidivated at a slightly higher rate than their male counterparts.

Three Year Recidivism Rates by Violent Offense and Gender

Table 11:

Offense Type	Males		Females		Total	
	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
Violent	969	33%	134	35%	1,103	34%
Non-Violent	989	30%	426	32%	1,415	30%
Total Releases	1,958	32%	560	33%	2,518	32%

- Non-violent offenders released during 2013 had a recidivism rate of 30% compared to a rate of 34% for those with a governing violent offense.
- The lower recidivism rate for males serving time for a non-violent governing offense compared to their female counterparts was largely driven by the larger number of drug offenders in the male cohort. Those serving a governing drug offense tend to have lower recidivism rates compared to other offense types.

Three Year Recidivism Rates by Mandatory Minimum Drug Offense and Gender

Table 12:

Offense Type	Males		Females		Total	
	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
Non-Mandatory	213	24%	78	19%	291	23%
Mandatory	325	20%	23	26%	348	20%
Total Releases	538	22%	101	21%	639	21%

- 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, in comparison to years prior to 2012. The majority of drug offenders released in 2013 were serving a mandatory minimum sentence (55%).
- Those serving a mandatory minimum recidivated at a rate of 20% compared to those who served a non-mandatory minimum drug offense at 23%.

Three Year Recidivism Rates by Risk Score and Gender

Table 13:

Risk Score	Males		Females		Total	
	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
High	1,076	41%	173	51%	1,249	43%
Moderate	378	27%	104	27%	482	27%
Low	455	13%	111	13%	566	13%
Total Releases	1,909	32%	388	34%	2,297	32%

- There were 221 inmates who did not receive the COMPAS risk assessment⁸ 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 high risk to recidivate recidivated at a rate of 43% compared to a rate of 27% for those assessed as moderate risk and 13% for those assessed as low risk. As the risk level decreased, so did the recidivism rate.

⁸ 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.

- The male recidivism rates by risk score closely mirrored the overall rates as they made up the majority of the release cohort.
- Females assessed as high risk recidivated at 51%. Those assessed as moderate or low risk had identical recidivism rates to their male counterparts, 27% and 13% respectively.

Three Year Recidivism Rates by Open Mental Health Status and Gender

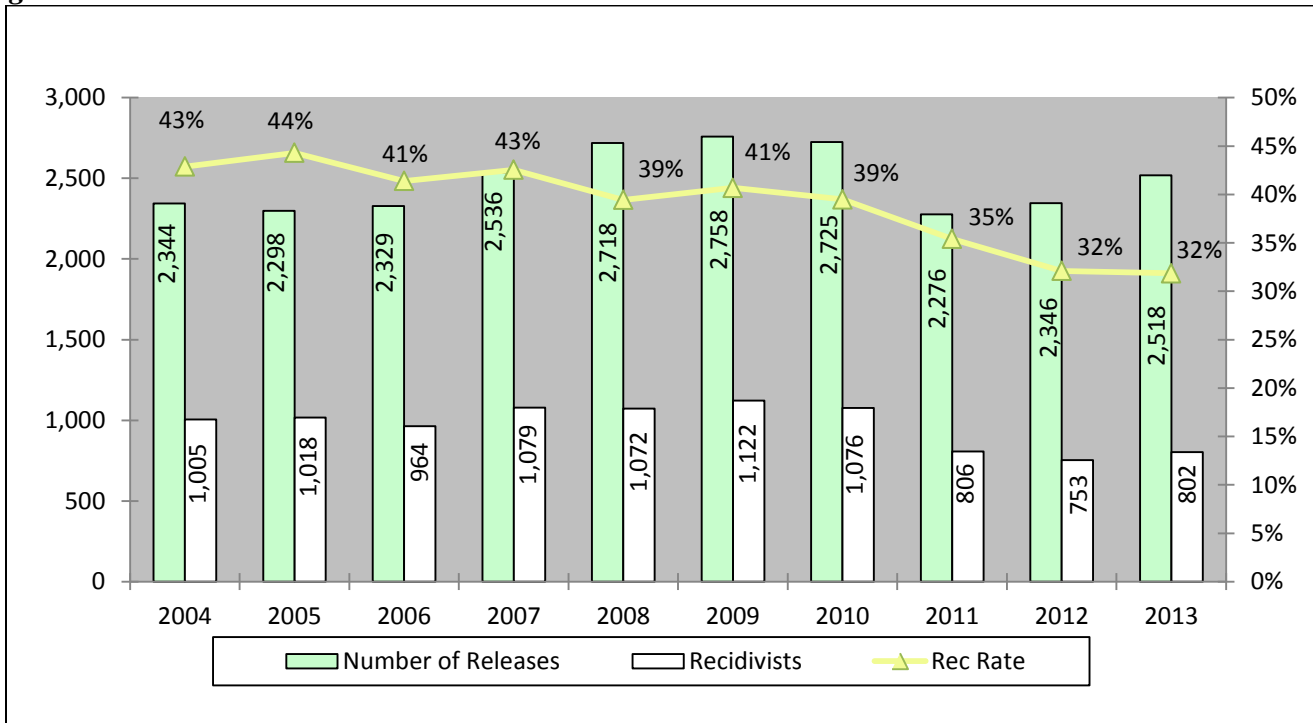
Table 14:

Open Mental Health	Males		Females		Total	
	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate	Number Releases	Recidivism Rate
Yes	407	37%	346	33%	753	36%
No	1,551	30%	214	32%	1,765	30%
Total Releases	1,958	32%	560	33%	2,518	32%

- The majority of releases in 2013 did not have an open mental health case (70%), influenced by the vast majority of males released without an open mental health case (79%). Females, on the other hand, were greatly different in that the majority of releases had an open mental health case (62%).
- Inmates with an open mental health status at time of release were more likely to recidivate than those who did not, 36% versus 30%.
- When examining recidivism rates by gender, there was a notable difference when comparing open mental health status for males, a seven percentage point increase for those who had an open mental health status versus not. Females, in contrast, had a minimal difference in recidivism rate regardless of their status, a one percentage point increase for those with an open mental health status.

Recidivism Trends 2004-2013

Figure 1:

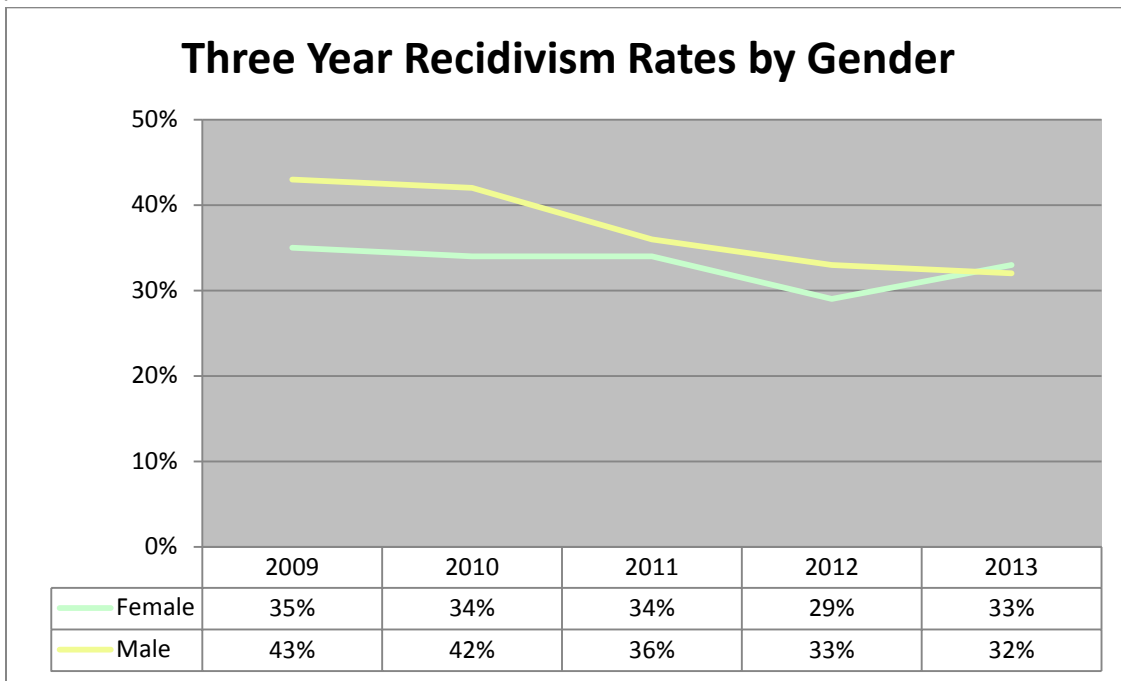


The recidivism rate experienced an overall downward trend over the ten year trend period as evidenced in the figure above. Between 2004 and 2007, the three year rate saw little change, ranging between 41%

and 44%. The rate would then steadily decline, ultimately ending the trend period at 32%. This was a 12 percentage point decrease from the high of 44% in 2005.

There were some notable differences between the 2005 and 2013 release cohorts which may give some insight as to why there was a sharp decrease in the recidivism rate from its peak to its lowest point. Parole releases, for example, made up 35% of the 2005 release cohort and had a recidivism rate of 50% whereas they were 28% of the 2013 releases with a recidivism rate of 34%. While parole releases tend to have a high recidivism rate due to the nature of having supervision, there was a considerable decline and smaller difference in comparison to those who were released due to expiration of sentence. This can certainly be accredited to continued improvements in reentry efforts as well as more suitable and prepared candidates for parole. Another notable difference between the two release years are the numbers of mandatory minimum drug offenders released. Inmates serving a governing mandatory minimum drug offense accounted for 37% of all drug offenders released in 2005, whereas they accounted for 55% of those released in 2013. Past MA DOC recidivism studies have consistently shown that mandatory minimum drug offenders recidivate at lower rates than drug offenders serving a non-mandatory sentence.

Figure 2:



The male recidivism rate hovered between 42% and 43% between 2009 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%. By the end of the trend period, the male recidivism rate was 32%. The female recidivism rate remained between 34% and 35% between 2009 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. In 2013, the female recidivism rate increased by four percentage points to 33%. Though not the highest recidivism rate during the trend period, it was the first time females had a higher three year recidivism rate compared to their male counterparts.

CONCLUSION

This brief provides detailed statistical data for the 2013 release cohort, a glance at the ongoing recidivism data collection. After a spike in 2007, the 3 year recidivism rate had stabilized over the next 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, in line with changes at the Massachusetts Parole Board in 2011. The recidivism rate would then drop again to 32% in 2012, a decrease of three percentage points, and remain at 32% in 2013. Though the changes in the parole rates still had an influence in this release year, the enactment of the Crime Bill in August 2012 resulted in the immediate decrease in sentence 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 recidivate 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 than non-mandatory minimum drug offenders.

As mentioned, increased reentry efforts and focus on case management for inmates also could have impacted those released in 2013. The move towards even more evidence-based practices and cost-benefit analyses for programs will be reflected in future release cohorts as the goal 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 residential substance abuse treatment program (Correctional Recovery Academy).

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	The common term for Chapter 192 of the Acts of 2012, effective August 2, 2012, which resulted in an immediate change to the sentence structure for numerous inmates.
Governing Offense	With respect to an individual who is incarcerated for multiple offenses, the governing offense is the offense that carries the longest maximum sentence.
Lower Security	Lower security includes minimum, pre-release, contract pre-release facilities, and electronic monitoring (ELMO).
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.
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.
Release Address	Release address is self-reported by the inmate prior to release. When a release address is not provided, the last known address reported by the inmate is used.
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>
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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