

## Offenders at the NDOC and Recidivism

The State of Nevada correctional system is responsible for managing prison inmates. This system is evaluated on many fronts, such as in its capacity to rehabilitate offenders and assist them to shape their lives and to be successful post incarceration. State officials aim at reducing the chances that an offender will return to the correctional system and preventing prison facilities from becoming revolving doors. Each year, the NDOC derives its return rate; that is, the proportion of offenders that return at least once to a State of Nevada correctional facility within 36 months from parole or discharge. Ex-felons that re-offend in other jurisdictions are not captured in the rate.

### Nevada and the U.S.

The most recent official recidivism rate (Bureau of Justice Statistics) encompassed offenders released in 1994 from 15 states that represented two-thirds of all state prison releases in the United States. The study concluded that 51.8% of offenders are re-arrested within a thirty-six-month period. The study found that 91% of those discharged were males and 9% were females.

Table 1 – Gender and Recidivism

Gender	Released	Recidivated	Rate
Female	737	167	22.66%
Male	4955	1423	28.72%
Grand Total	5692	1590	27.93%

Table 2 – Release type

Release Type	Released	Returned	Rate
Paroled	3387	1016	30.00%
Discharged	2305	574	24.90%
Total	5692	1590	27.93%

## Characteristics of Recidivism

The Offender Management Division investigated the release characteristics of offenders released between the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and the 31<sup>st</sup> of December of 2009. During this period, 5,692 offenders exited the system, 3,387 (59.50%) were paroled and 2,305 were discharged (40.50%). Ten percent of all released offenders were housed at a restitution center prior to release and 90% were living in other type of housing. The percentage of females released represented 12.95% and 87.05% was represented by males. Of all 5,692 offenders released, 167 (10.5%) females and 1,423 (89.5%) males returned. Of those who were paroled, 1,016 (30.00%) returned; and of those who were discharged, 574 (24.90%) also returned. In all, 1,590 were re-admitted to the Nevada Department of Corrections within the 36-month period of the study or 27.93%.

## Offenders at Risk

Of interest is also the age bracket of offenders who recidivate. For example, when the releases load is categorized in age brackets with a class size of 10, it is found that the younger offenders have a higher return rate. The age group of offenders under the age of 18 is too small to derive meaningful conclusions. It can be observed from Table 3 that for the age categories of offenders ages 18 to 67 the rate declines with age. No offenders of ages 68 to 77 were re-admitted. Violent and drug offenders in the 18 to 57 years of age categories represent the largest groups of recidivating inmates. However, property and drug offenders are the two largest groups among the 58 to 67 age category.

Among the various ethnic categories, the Native Indian group was found to have the highest re-admission rate and the African American group is second in rank.

Property offenders had the highest recidivism rate of all offense groups, followed by violent drug offenders.

Table 3 – Ethnical and racial distribution

Ethnicity	Rate
Indian	36.67%
Asian	26.50%
African American	33.48%
Caucasian	27.29%
Hispanic	19.98%
All	27.93%

Table 4 - Offense groups

Offense Group	Recidivism Rate
Drugs	27.76%
DUI	13.42%
Other	19.39%
Property	33.36%
Sexual	23.67%
Violence	26.86%
Grand Total	27.93%

Table 5 – Age groups

Age Range	Released	Returned	Rate
Under 18	2	1	50.00%
18-27	1610	529	32.86%
28-37	1827	506	27.70%
38-47	1451	394	27.15%
48-57	647	138	21.33%
58-67	139	22	15.83%
68-77	16	0	0.00%
Total	5692	1590	27.93%

Table 6 – Education programs with the lowest rates.

Education			
All	Released	Returned	Rate
Yes	394	101	25.63%
No	5298	1489	28.10%
Total	5692	1590	27.93%
HS	Released	Returned	Rate
Yes	160	43	26.88%
No	5532	1547	27.96%
Total	5692	1590	27.93%
GED	Released	Returned	Rate
Yes	255	64	25.10%
No	5437	1526	28.07%
Total	5692	1590	27.93%

### The Possible Relationship between Program Participation and Recidivism.

Various programs for the offender population are offered by the NDOC. Programs have many non-tangible benefits such as helping offenders improve their sense of self worth and purpose, control anger, manage relationships and emotions, combat addiction, and provide the population with scheduled activities. These activities train them to earn time management skills, provide them structure, and maintain order in the prison environment. In addition to the behavior health classes, the NDOC provides academic education and job training programs. Offenders may earn a High School diploma, a GED, a college degree, and vocational skills.

Table 7 –Correctional programs with the lowest rates.

Cage Your Rage	Released	Returned	Rate
Anger Management	124	27	21.77%
Domestic Violence	52	10	19.23%
Emotions Management	87	21	24.14%
Relationship Skills	122	28	22.95%
Victim Awareness	178	48	26.97%

Although there is no universal formula for the recidivism rate, the NDOC follows the general guidelines. Recidivism is a complex problem that is related to the specific characteristics of the offender, his or her background, age, income, and personal tendencies. Relative to former national studies, the Nevada Department of Corrections believes that its recidivism rate is standard or better. Programs at the Nevada Department of Corrections were not designed to reduce recidivism. It is assumed that without programs, prisons would be much more difficult to manage and recidivism could increase in the long-run. Programs also allow inmates to earn time toward their sentences. Thus, weighing the cost of programs against the cost of reducing recidivism is not a simple task and may and may not be relevant. In all, when the 2009 release cohort data were observed, the NDOC found that education programs have the lowest return rates of all programs; and select correctional programs have lower recidivism rates than the overall rate. These rates are reflected in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 8 – Gender and recidivism.

Status	Female	Male	Rate
Not re-admitted	77.34%	71.28%	72.07%
Re-admitted	22.66%	28.72%	27.93%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

**Summary**

- Recidivism in Nevada has stayed in the 20s% range.
- The age, gender, and offense group are factors that affect recidivism.
- The direct effect of programs on recidivism is unknown. Programs provide a good sense of structure and help staff with prison management. Select program participants have lower rates.
- Males and young adults have higher recidivism rates than females and older



**Nevada Department of Corrections**

The Research, Planning, and Statistics Section of the Offender Management Division of the Department of Corrections specialize in inmate statistics, planning, forecasting, and policy analysis.

Several reports and planning documents are posted on the Department's website.