

Recidivism as Defined by the NDOC

Recidivism rates reflect the percentage of offenders released from prison and that returns and becomes re-incarcerated. While there is no universal formula for capturing the rate of re-imprisonment, certain guidelines exist that have been traditionally applied by a variety of correctional jurisdictions. In a perfect world, the most accurate methodology would consist of tracking all re-arrests that follow an offender post-release. Data would be retrieved from a single point-of-entry database such as those already available from the FBI. However, these databases require certified operators, and following inmates across jurisdictions is not practical. At the NDOC, we have made an effort to, at least, capture the rate at which offenders return to the NDOC within a 36-month period following release on parole or discharge. Since 2006, the NDOC has followed a specific criteria in deriving its recidivism rates by excluding duplicate records, safekeepers, deaths, or offenders that were erroneously coded as releases (inmate releases and re-admissions are accounted for only once during the period of the study).

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

Type	% Releases	% Re-Admitted	% of Re-Admissions
Discharged	45.60%	23.09%	41.83%
Paroled	54.40%	26.91%	58.17%
Total	100.00%	25.17%	100.00%

Characteristics of Released and Recidivated offenders

The Research Section of the Offender Management Division collected data from January 1st, 2008 to December 31st, 2010 for its recidivism study. Based on the 5,301 offenders included in the research, it concluded that 25.17% of offenders released on parole or discharged were re-admitted during the 36-month period of the study. This rate is 1.43% larger than the 36-month return rate for 2006 releases previously conducted by the NDOC

The data included 54.40% paroled offenders of which 26.91% returned and 45.60% discharged offenders of which 23.09% returned. See Table 1.

Characteristics of Released and Recidivated Offenders

The 2008 release cohort consisted of 2,417 discharged and 2,884 paroled offenders, 86.87% were males and 13.13% were females. See Table 2.

The NDOC uses six offense groups to define its population: Drug, DUI, Other, Property, Sex, and Violence. The largest group of released and returned offenders consisted of property offenders with the second largest being composed of drug offenders. DUI offenders comprised 4.15% of releases with 11.82% returning. Sex offenders comprised one of the smallest categories of releases (5.28%) with 21.43% returning to the NDOC.

Table 3

Offense Group & Recidivism	Discharged	Paroled	Grand Total
	Returned	Returned	
Drug	534	1097	1631
	108	288	396
DUI	114	106	220
	16	10	26
Other	107	59	166
	30	9	39
Property	799	875	1674
	250	264	514
Sex	220	60	280
	37	23	60
Violence	643	687	1330
	117	182	299
	2417	2,884	5,301
Grand Total	558	776	1334

Table 2

Gender	Discharged	Paroled	Total
Female	8.23%	17.23%	13.13%
Male	91.77%	82.77%	86.87%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table 4

Offense Group	Released	Re-admitted
Drug	30.77%	24.28%
DUI	4.15%	11.82%
Other	3.13%	23.49%
Property	31.58%	30.70%
Sex	5.28%	21.43%
Violence	25.09%	22.41%

Table 5

Annual Average per Inmate Cost			
FY08	FY09	FY10	Avg
\$20,503	\$21,242	\$21,382	\$21,042

How can recidivism be more precisely maintained and used?

- Design programs that specifically target populations at risk of reoffending.
- Create agreements with inmates so that admission into a specific program will require follow through post-release.
- Emulate programs already proved to be effective in other jurisdictions in reducing recidivism rates.
- Coordinate post-release and re-entry services with community providers.

Why Does Recidivism Matter?

Recidivism is a core performance indicator to law enforcement, prison planners, and program administrators (just to name a few) because it measures how well it prepares its offenders to avoid further confinement. Having a feel for how many offenders will return helps derive projections, improve programs for rehabilitation, and assists policy makers and educational leaders to adopt measures intended to hinder criminal activity in society. Following offenders by gender and offense group is also essential for preparing communities to assess the risks associated with releasing offenders, it provides additional planning tools for public agencies, and helps to create or enhance stronger programs for inmates and ex-felons according to their characteristics.

One way to look at the meaning of recidivism is to weigh the cost it imposes on the system. The total prison population on December 31st, 2010 was 12,769; knowing that the recidivism is 25.17% we can assume that the population could have been reduced by 1,334 offenders during the preceding 36 months if the public system had any control over these offenders. The average cost of an offender between Fiscal Years 2008 and 2010 was \$21,042; thus, \$28,081,275.80 could have been saved to the State of Nevada if none of these offenders had been readmitted.

Table 6

Recidivism	Offenders	Total Costs
25.17%	1,334	\$28,081,275.80



Nevada Department of Corrections

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

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

www.doc.nv.gov

Inquiries about this report can be sent to:

Alejandra Livingston, MS
P.O. Box 7011, Carson City, NV 89702
alivingston@doc.nv.gov
Phone (775)887-3357
Fax (77) 887-3243