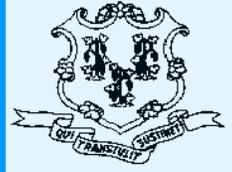


Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division Incarceration History & Age



RESEARCH, ANALYSIS & EVALUATION — WWW.CT.GOV/OPM/CriminalJustice/Research

Findings

- Youth and sentence history are both important predictors of high recidivism risk (See Chart 2).
- Most male prisoners (67%) who were released or discharged from prison in 2005 had served a prior term of incarceration as a sentenced offender in a Connecticut prison.
- Young men, under the age of 24, who were completing their first prison sentence, comprised the largest group of male offenders released or discharged during 2005. 63% of these young men were returned to prison within three years of their release.
- Older, first-time, male prisoners, offenders over the age of 42, had the lowest recidivism rate among all males released in 2005. Only 24% of these men were returned to prison within three years of their release. Many of these offenders were incarcerated for DUI-related offenses.

This report is based on analysis of the data contained in the movement and sentence files of 14,391 sentenced, male offenders who were released or discharged from a Connecticut prison during 2005. For the purposes of this study, a prison sentence is defined as a unique sentencing event noted in the offender's movement file. Calculating sentences this way can minimize an offender's incarceration history since one sentencing event can group multiple convictions from different criminal dockets.

Predictors of recidivism, male offenders

Young male offenders who are released from prison are more likely to be reincarcerated than older, male offenders. In its February 2010 recidivism study¹, OPM found that 47% of sentenced males, under the age of 24, who were released from prison in 2005, were returned to prison to serve a new prison sentence within three years. Among older male offenders – those over the age of 42 – only 29% were resentedenced to prison within three years.

The extensiveness of an offender's incarceration history is also a significant predictor of high recidivism rates. Among males who were released from their first sentence in a state prison in 2005, 46% were back behind bars within three years. For male offenders who had served 3 or 4 prior sentences, 61% were reincarcerated within three years. During 2005, 1,215 male offenders were released from prison after completing at least eight prison sentences; 81% of these men were returned to prison within 36 months.

Table 1 Recidivism & incarceration history, 2005 male-releases

Incarceration history, extent at 2005 release	Offender count	%	Recidivism, return to prison		
			12-month rate	24-month rate	36-month rate
First Sentence	4815	33%	26%	39%	46%
Second Sentence	2837	20%	32%	48%	56%
3rd or 4th Sentence	3122	22%	36%	53%	61%
5th through 8th Sentence	2402	17%	44%	61%	70%
Over 8 Sentences	1215	8%	59%	75%	81%
All male offenders	14391	100%	35%	51%	58%

In 2009, Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division at OPM assisted the CT DOC as it worked to validate a new risk assessment tool. This tool, the Treatment and Program Assessment Instrument or TPAI² assigns a risk score to offenders based on several criteria including two well known predictors of recidivism: the offender's age and the extensiveness of the offender's criminal history.

This report is intended to enhance our understanding of the relationship between age and the extensiveness of an offender's history of incarceration by providing readers with a more nuanced picture of the dynamics and characteristics of the current prison population. Specifically, we are interested in investigating whether significant differences exist between first-time offenders and career criminals, particularly with the safety of the public and overall recidivism rates.

¹ 2010 Annual Recidivism Report, CT OPM, February 2010, page 20

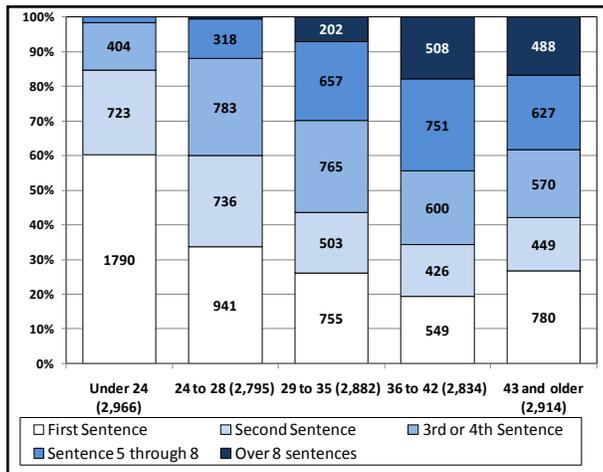
² http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/cjppd/cjresearch/forecastresearchworkgroup/presentations/20090311_tpaiassessmentspathynes.pdf

Incarceration history and age

Connecticut is one of a handful of states with a unified prison system³, i.e., one that operates both jails and prisons. Because unified prison systems supervise both accused and sentenced inmate populations, developing a model that accurately describes the combined incarceration histories of all sentenced offenders is difficult given the variety of pathway permutations that are associated with state's prison population.

For the purposes of this study, the calculation of the extensiveness of offender sentence histories was based on movement file data indicating that the offender began a new sentence. Chart 1 displays data on 14,391 sentenced, male offenders who were released or discharged from a state prison in 2005. Each age quintile is separated into subgroups of offenders with different sentence histories.

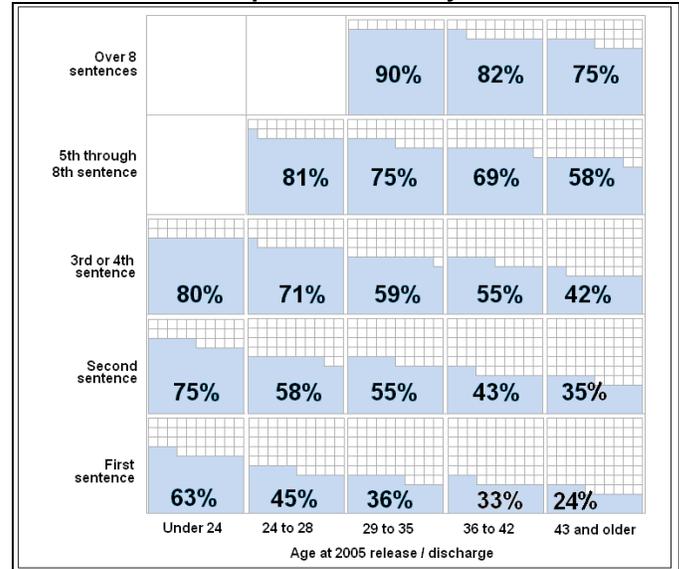
Chart 1 Sentence history by age quintile



It is apparent from the data that as they age, the likelihood that an offender has served a previous term of incarceration increases significantly. Among males under the age of 24, for example, 60% were completing their first prison sentence at the time of their 2005 release. Among offenders aged 36 to 42, only 20% were completing their first sentence while approximately 45% had previously served at least five sentences in state prison.

Chart 2 displays the recidivism rates of male offender who were released or discharged in 2005, grouped according to the offender's age-at-release and sentence history. The chart reveals that recidivism rates generally decay as an offender's age increases regardless of extent of the offender's sentence history. The chart also shows that recidivism rate also increases, independently of age, as a function of the extensiveness of an offender's prison history.

Chart 2 Return to prison within 3 years



First-time prisoners over the age of 42 were the least likely to return to prison within three years (24%).

Older male offenders

Approximately 20% of male, sentenced offenders who were released from prison in 2005 were over the age of 42. Of these 2,914 offenders, 780 were completing their first prison sentences in Connecticut.

First-time offenders were sentenced to prison for a range of 110 offenses over the previous five years. When offense frequencies were evaluated, DUI-related offenses were the 1st, 2nd and 4th most common offenses among older, first time offenders.

Table 2 Most common offenses, first-timers

Rank	Offenses within 5 years of 2005 release	Freq. of offenses	Freq. %	Cum. %, Freq.
1	OPERATING UNDER INFLU OF LIQ OR DRUG	223	19%	19%
2	OPERATING UNDER INFL 2ND OFF	106	9%	28%
3	VIOLATION OF PROB OR COND DISCHARGE	91	8%	36%
4	DRIVING WHILE LIC SUSPENDED FOR DWI	64	6%	42%
5	SALE OF HALLUCIGEN/NARCOTIC SUBSTNC F	50	4%	46%

In contrast, older offenders, those with more extensive prison histories (over 8 prior sentences), demonstrated a different pattern of criminal behavior than first-time prisoners.

Table 3 Most common offenses, over 8 sent.

Rank	Offenses within 5 years of 2005 release	Freq. of offenses	Freq. %	Cum. %, Freq.
1	LARCENY, SIXTH DEGREE CM	276	12%	12%
2	FAILURE TO APPEAR, 2ND DEGREE AM	169	7%	19%
3	POSSESSION OF NARCOTICS F	165	7%	26%
4	VIOLATION OF PROB OR COND DISCHARGE	160	7%	33%
5	BURGLARY, THIRD DEGREE DF	141	6%	39%

Although it was not uncommon for these offenders to exhibit a history with DUI-offenses, these career offenders were much more likely to have criminal histories featuring property and drug offenses.

³ In addition to Connecticut, Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island and Vermont, also maintain unified prison systems.