

OPM - Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division

Recidivism, 2017-release cohort

Highlights

In 2017, 10,390 sentenced offenders were released or discharged from CT prison facilities. During the 12 months that followed, 32% were returned to prison, either facing new charges, to begin another prison sentence, or as a result of a remand. By way of comparison, in 2015 11,199 sentenced offenders were released or discharged from CT prison facilities. During the first 12 months after release, 32% were returned to prison, for any reason.

As has been the case with prior cohorts, a history of serving sentences at the CT DOC was the best predictor of recidivism among all the factors that were considered. 21% of sentenced offenders who were released or discharged from prison in 2017 were completing their first sentence. 13% had completed at least 13 prison sentences in the past. Prior sentence history was highly predictive for returns to prison within the first year. 19% of first sentence completers, compared to 48% of those with the most substantial histories returned to prison w/in 12 months

Offenders under supervision, particularly those supervised by the DOC were the most likely to return to prison in the first year following release. This finding is not surprising given that these offenders can be returned for technical violations of release which would not trigger returns for offenders under probation or those with no court ordered supervision. In 2017, 50% of the offenders who returned to prison within six months had been remanded for a technical violation. In 2015, 48% of returnees were back due to a technical violation.

Returns-to prison within 12 months of release

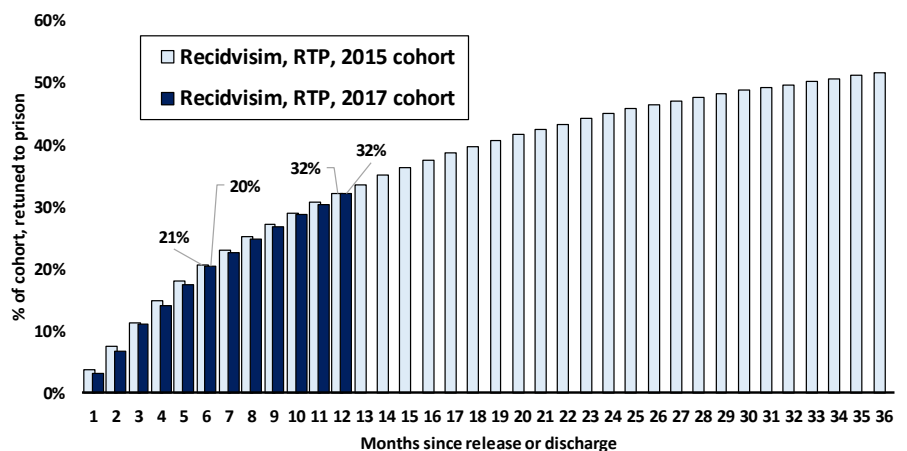
OPM's Criminal Justice Research Unit has a statutory mandate to produce annual reports on recidivism among Connecticut prisoners. In 2020, we investigated patterns of recidivism comparing two release cohorts. among pre-trial detainees who were released from jails in 2014. In this report, we evaluate the 12-month return-to-prison rates of 10,390 sentenced prisoners who left a DOC facility during 2017.

OPM typically considered four measures of recidivism including 1) new arrests 2) new convictions 3) returns-to-prison for any reason, and 4) returns-to-prison to begin a new prison sentence. Of these measures, two – new arrests and returns-to-prison for any reason – generate the most meaningful data on recidivism during the short term.

Given the significant changes effecting the prison system in CT in recent years, interest is generally focused on recidivism trends among recently released cohorts of prisoners. OPM's website contains a variety of reports on recidivism from prisoner cohorts from the years 2005, 2008, 2011 and 2014. In this report we begin investigating recidivism among offenders released in 2017. Given the short window of time, we calculated 12-month return to prison rates for the group and compare it directly to the return to prison rates of the 2015 release cohort. The pattern that emerges is exceedingly similar. At the 12-month mark, both cohorts have a return to prison rate of exactly 32%.

OPM plans to update the return to prison rate of the 2017 release cohort each of the next to years and draw comparisons against the 2015 cohort. Our expectation is that the two groups will behave similarly and by conducting this exercise, we can track whether this assumption bears out.

One cause for optimism lies in the fact that despite the nearly identical rates of return to prison, the 2017 cohort returned 259 fewer released offenders to prison due to the smaller cohort size.



Comparing two cohorts

	2015	2017	% change
Prison population on July 1st	16,025	14,333	-11%
Released/discharged, sentenced	11,199	10,390	-7%
Released/discharged, men	9,911	9,119	-8%
Released/discharged, women	1,288	1,271	-1%
Under the age of 25	2,204	1,751	-21%

In 2015 the prison population was 11% larger than in 2017. The size difference ripples through the subgroups of the two cohorts. The release/discharge cohort is a comparable 7% smaller. The female component of the 2017 cohort, interestingly, is only 1% smaller than in 2015; a reflection of the larger drop in the male population between the two cohorts.

2015 release cohort - 11,199 offenders

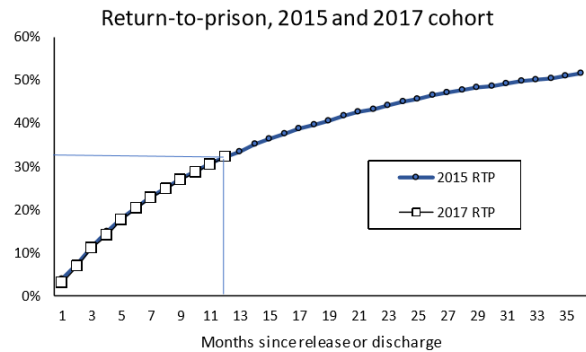
	Total	Women	Men
15 to 25	2204	209	1995
26 to 31	2480	298	2182
32 to 37	2100	268	1832
38 to 47	2318	271	2047
48 to 77	2097	242	1855
Total	11199	1288	9911
15 to 25	20%	16%	20%
26 to 31	22%	23%	22%
32 to 37	19%	21%	18%
38 to 47	21%	21%	21%
48 to 77	19%	19%	19%

The 2015 cohort skewed younger than in 2017. The charts above show that 21% fewer offenders under the age of 25 were released in 2017 vs 2015

2017 release cohort - 10,390 offenders

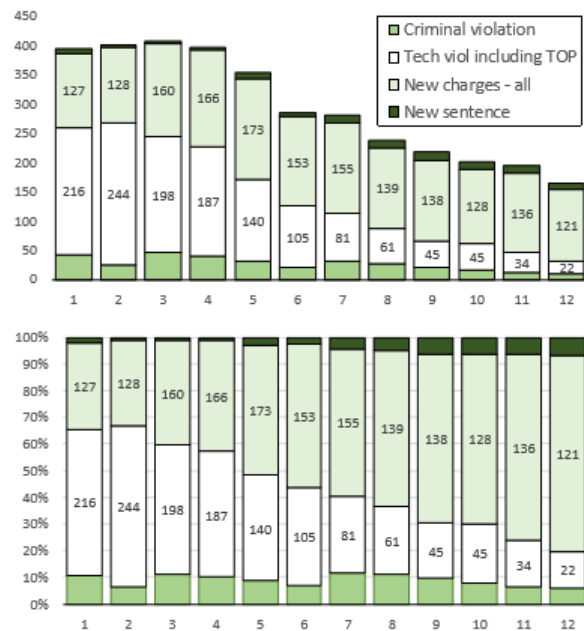
	Total	Women	Men
15 to 25	1751	155	1596
26 to 31	2376	314	2062
32 to 37	2047	296	1751
38 to 47	2237	276	1961
48 to 77	1979	230	1749
Total	10390	1271	9119
15 to 25	17%	12%	18%
26 to 31	23%	25%	23%
32 to 37	20%	23%	19%
38 to 47	22%	22%	22%
48 to 77	19%	18%	19%

Return to prison rates



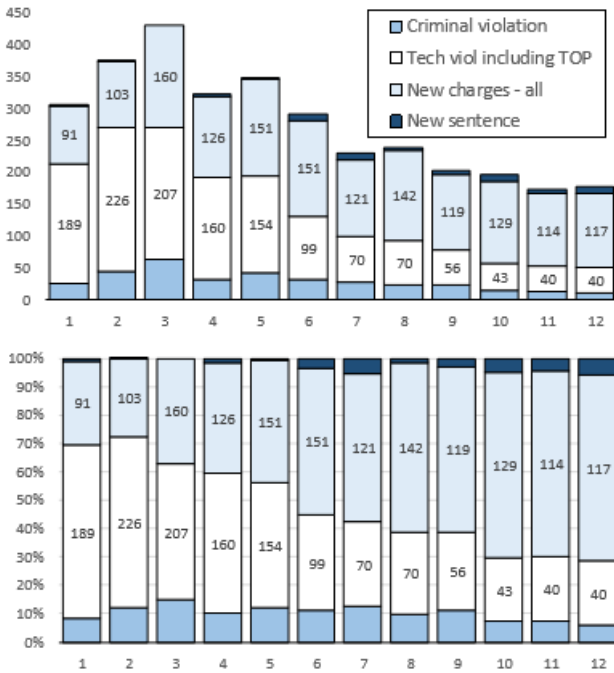
The chart above depicts how similar the two cohorts track over the first year following release from prison. The two lines nearly perfectly overlay one another with an identical 32% return to prison recidivism rate the first year following release.

Return-to-prison, 2015 cohort



The pattern of return in also remarkable similar. Remands, particularly technical violations are a major factor in recidivism, especially in the first year. The two bar charts show, month over month, how many offenders are returned to prison by return type with the percentages below. The two cohorts look nearly identical.

Return-to-prison, 2017 cohort



This report was produced by the Research Unit in the Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division at the

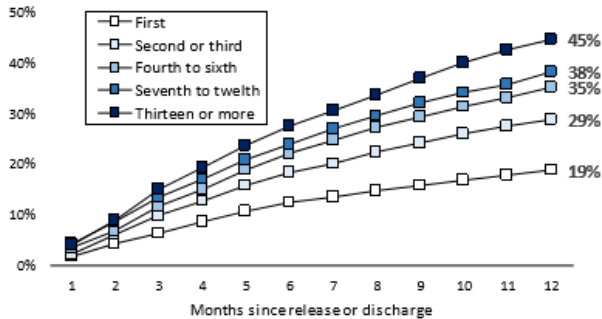
Connecticut Office of Policy and Management.
450 Capitol Avenue
Hartford CT, 06106

The findings were presented to the CT Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission in February 2020.

This report is available on-line at the OPM-CJPPD website. All questions, comments and suggestions should be directed to the Research Unit at CJPPD.

Sentence history

Sentence history and returns-to-prison



As has been the case with prior cohorts, a history of serving sentences at the CT DOC was the best predictor of recidivism among all the factors that were considered. 21% of sentenced offenders who were released or discharged from prison in 2017 were completing their first sentence. 13% had completed at least 13 prison sentences in the past. Prior sentence history was highly predictive for returns to prison within the first year. 19% of first sentence completers, compared to 48% of those with the most substantial histories returned to prison within 12 months.