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Time Served in Prison and on Parole, 1984

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The median time served in confinement (including jail time) for individuals released from prisons in 33 States in 1984 was 17 months or 45.4% of their original court-ordered sentences, according to data from the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP). Those released for violent offenses served a median time in confinement of 28 months, about twice as long as either property or drug offenders.

Other findings include:

- Those released from prison for murder and nonnegligent manslaughter served a median of 78 months in confinement; rapists served 44 months; robbers, 30 months; burglars, 17 months; and drug traffickers, 16 months.
- The average amount of time spent in jail that was credited toward an offender's prison sentence was about 4 months.
- Violent offenders with a history of felony incarcerations served about 6 months longer in prison than those with no such history; property offenders served about 3 months longer; and drug offenders, 1 month longer.
- Corrections officials estimated the minimum amount of time that persons entering prison in 1984 would spend in confinement to be a median of 23 months; for violent offenders, it was 35 months.

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This Special Report presents data, collected from the National Corrections Reporting Program, on time served by offenders released from State prisons and from parole in 1984. For the first time we have been able to measure the total time an offender serves on a court sentence and what proportion of that time is actually spent in confinement. In addition, the report compares the time served in prison by those who successfully completed their parole terms with those who were unsuccessful and returned to prison.

We are indebted to the 33 States that participated in the second annual NCRP. Their assistance made this report possible.

Steven R. Schlesinger
Director

- For persons discharged from parole in 1984, the total amount of time served in prison and jail and on parole was an average of 60 months for a violent offense, 42 months for a drug offense, and 37 months for a property offense. The amount of time spent in jail and prison was about three-fifths of the total time served; the time on parole, about two-fifths.
- On average, offenders who successfully completed parole had spent less time in confinement prior to being pa-

roled (27 months) than those who were eventually unsuccessful (31 months).

- Males on parole were more likely than females to be returned to custody for a parole violation (22% vs. 14%).
- Those who did not successfully complete parole served an average of 18 months on parole prior to revocation. Drug offenders (23 months) and violent offenders (22 months) spent the longest average time on parole prior to revocation; property offenders, the shortest (15 months).

Prison releases, 1984

This study, based upon data from the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP), reports the amount of time that offenders who were released in 1984 had served in jail and prison. In addition it measures time spent on parole, thus estimating for the first time the total amount of time that an offender spends under correctional supervision for a particular offense.

During 1984, 159,000 persons were released from State prisons in the 33 reporting States. These States accounted for approximately 76% of all those released from State correctional facilities during the year. Every region in the country was represented among the reporting States. The Northeast, with 90% of its releases accounted for, had the highest coverage, followed by the Midwest with 82% coverage, the West with 77%, and the South with 69%. Included in the study are 8 of the 10 largest State prison systems, ac-

counting for about two-thirds of all NCRP releases.

Of the 159,000 releases reported by participating States, 57% were first releases. As defined here, a "first release" is a person being released from prison for the first time on his or her current sentence. Excluded are persons leaving prison in 1984 who had previously been conditionally released from prison for the same offense and then were returned to prison for violating the conditions of that release. Data on time served in prison are limited to first releases with sentences of more than 1 year.¹

Offender characteristics

The vast majority (93.6%) of those leaving State prisons in 1984 were male, a proportion that has remained generally stable since data first became available in 1926 (table 1).

The racial composition of persons released from prison was 54.1% white, 45% black, and .9% other races, primarily Asians and American Indians. This racial distribution has remained

¹See Methodology for more information on which inmates are included in the study and how this compares with 1983 and previous years.

Characteristic	Percent of releases	
	All releases	First releases
Sex	100%	100%
Male	93.6	92.9
Female	6.4	7.1
Race	100%	100%
White	54.1	54.3
Black	45.0	44.8
Other	.9	.9
Age at release ^a	100%	100%
Under 18	.4	.5
18-24	33.5	36.0
25-29	28.3	25.4
30-34	17.6	16.6
35-44	15.3	14.8
45 or older	7.0	6.7
Education ^b	100%	100%
8th grade or less	21.8	21.5
9-11th grade	46.8	46.5
High school	26.4	26.1
Some college	4.9	5.7
Other	.2	.2
Number of releases	158,897	90,687

Note: Data on sex were reported for 99.9% of the 158,897 releases from prison in 1984 with sentences of more than a year, data on race for 97.3%, and data on education for 51.1%. Data on sex were also available for 99.9% of the 90,687 first releases with sentences of more than a year. Data on race were reported for 98.6% and data on education for 57%. Data on age at release were available for 100% of all releases and 100% of first releases.

^aThe median age at release was 28 for all releases and 27 for first releases.

^bThe median educational level was 10 years for all releases and for first releases.

Release type	Percent of releases	
	All releases	First releases
All release types	100%	100%
Conditional releases	81.7%	77.9%
Parole board	45.2	43.5
Mandatory parole	30.7	28.9
Other conditional	5.8	5.5
Unconditional releases	13.3%	16.8%
Expiration	12.5	15.5
Commutation/pardon	.2	.2
Other unconditional	.7	1.0
Death	.7%	.5%
Other releases	1.6%	1.6%
Unknown	2.8%	3.3%
Number of releases	158,897	90,687

Note: Data are based on persons who had received sentences of more than a year.

unchanged since 1978, when data first became available.

The median age of all prisoners released in 1984 was 28 years; the median age of first releases was 27. Young offenders age 18 to 24 were more than a third of all persons released. Each successively older age group was a smaller proportion of all released prisoners.

More than two-thirds of those released had not completed high school.

Most serious offense	Percent of first releases	1984		1983		
		Time served in jail and prison		Time served in jail and prison		
		Median	Mean	Median	Mean	
All offenses	100%	17 months	23.4 months	100%	19 months	25.1 months
Violent offenses	31.4	26	35.7	37.4	30	37.6
Murder	1.8	78	85.3	2.4	82	91.4
Manslaughter	2.7	32	35.2	3.1	33	36.0
Kidnaping	.6	31	38.4	1.0	35	41.8
Rape	1.7	44	49.2	2.1	48	55.0
Other sexual assault	2.7	26	31.3	3.1	30	34.7
Robbery	13.7	30	35.4	16.5	30	35.3
Assault	7.2	22	26.2	7.3	25	27.6
Other violent	1.1	16	19.6	1.9	15	18.2
Property offenses	47.4	15	18.5	46.1	15	18.2
Burglary	22.0	17	20.6	25.1	17	19.9
Larceny/theft	13.2	12	15.1	10.7	12	15.1
Motor vehicle theft	1.8	14	16.4	1.7	16	17.4
Arson	.9	19	23.1	.6	22	24.5
Fraud	5.7	13	16.3	5.5	15	17.6
Stolen property	2.7	13	16.9	1.2	12	15.6
Other property	1.2	12	16.6	1.0	11	14.0
Drug offenses	10.5	14	16.7	8.9	15	18.3
Possession	2.2	12	13.9	2.3	12	14.8
Trafficking	5.5	16	18.0	5.5	18	19.1
Other drug	2.7	13	16.6	1.1	17	23.2
Public-order offenses	8.7	9	13.2	5.7	9	12.0
Weapons	1.6	15	18.0	1.4	16	18.5
Other public-order	7.1	7	11.5	4.4	7	9.8
Other offenses	2.0	15	17.8	1.9	17	17.6
Number of releases	90,041	64,973		48,374	38,922	

Note: Data on offense distribution in 1984 are based on 99.3% of the 90,687 first releases from prison with sentences of more than a year. Data on time served in jail and prison are based on 64,973 first releases for which conviction offense, time served in local jails credited to the prison sentence, and time served in prison were all reported.

As a group, they averaged 10 years of schooling. One in 4 of those released had a high school diploma, and 1 in 20 had attended college.

Type of prison release

Four-fifths of those leaving State prisons in 1984 were released conditionally, meaning that their continued freedom was contingent upon following specified rules of conduct, the violation of which could result in a return to prison (table 2). Discretionary parole, where a board or commission decides an inmate's release, was the most common form of conditional release, accounting for over half of all such releases. Mandatory parole releases, where release dates are determined by the original sentence minus any credits for good behavior in prison, comprised more than a third of all conditional releases. The remaining types of conditional releases were probation and court-ordered conditional releases.

Sentence expiration accounted for more than 9 out of 10 of the unconditional releases from State facilities during the year. The remaining unconditional releases were court-ordered unconditional releases, commutations, and pardons.

Time served in prison

Among first releases in 1984 with a prison sentence of more than 1 year, 31.4% had been sentenced for a violent crime, compared to 37.4% in 1983 (table 3). Robbery was the most prevalent violent offense in each year, followed by assault. The percentages of persons released for murder (which includes nonnegligent manslaughter) and rape were down slightly from 1983. Property offenders were almost half of the releases in both 1984 and 1983. Burglary and larceny/theft were the most common property offenses, together accounting for over a third of those released in both years. Drug offenders and public-order offenders each were a slightly higher percentage of those released in 1984 than they were in 1983.

In 1984 first releases spent an average, or mean, time of 23.4 months in prison (including credit for time spent in jail) prior to release (table 4). The median time was 17 months (that is, half served 17 or more months, and half served 17 or fewer months). Violent offenders served a median of 28 months, about twice as long as either property or drug offenders and three times as long as public-order offenders. The median time served was longest for murder (78 months), followed by rape (44 months), manslaughter (32 months), and kidnaping (31 months). Among property offenders the median time served was longest for arson and burglary. Drug offenders served a median time of 14 months in prison prior to release; public-order offenders, 9 months.

The median time served for all first releases in 1984 was 2 months less than for those released in 1983. This decrease in time served may be partially attributable to the lower percentage of violent offenders released in 1984 and to changes in the composition of States reporting to the program.²

On average, offenders had served 45.4% of the maximum length of their court-ordered prison sentences. Violent offenders on average served the highest percentage of their maximum sentences, followed by property offenders, public-order offenders, and drug offenders. Murderers received the longest sentences to prison, and they served the longest amount of time.

²See the discussion of year-to-year comparisons in Methodology.

Table 4. First releases from State prisons, 1984: Sentence length and time served, by offense

Most serious offense	Sentence length		Time served in:				Percent of sentence served in confinement
	Median	Mean*	Prison only		Jail and prison		
			Median	Mean	Median	Mean	
All offenses	36 months	64.7 months	13 months	19.6 months	17 months	23.4 months	45.4%
Violent offenses	60	92.2	23	31.0	28	35.7	50.5
Murder	180	244.8	65	76.0	78	85.3	42.2
Manslaughter	60	95.4	24	29.3	32	35.2	50.2
Kidnaping	60	106.5	25	34.4	31	38.4	51.0
Rape	72	113.1	37	44.2	44	49.2	50.7
Other sexual assault	60	66.5	19	25.5	26	31.3	43.6
Robbery	60	96.3	25	31.4	30	35.4	52.4
Assault	36	59.8	15	20.7	22	26.2	51.4
Other violent	36	65.7	12	15.1	16	19.6	46.7
Property offenses	36	53.2	11	15.2	15	18.5	44.0
Burglary	36	60.5	13	17.3	17	20.6	44.2
Larceny/theft	24	46.8	9	13.1	12	16.1	43.4
Motor vehicle theft	24	36.5	10	12.8	14	16.4	55.3
Arson	60	80.0	14	19.5	19	23.1	39.7
Fraud	36	46.2	9	13.3	13	16.3	42.5
Stolen property	36	45.1	10	13.6	13	16.9	41.5
Other property	36	46.2	9	13.0	12	16.6	46.8
Drug offenses	36	55.2	10	13.5	14	16.7	38.8
Possession	24	44.2	6	11.3	12	13.9	39.2
Trafficking	36	54.4	11	14.1	16	17.9	38.7
Other drug	36	63.0	11	14.1	13	16.6	38.7
Public-order offenses	24	35.4	6	10.4	9	13.2	39.5
Weapons	36	47.3	11	14.6	15	18.0	46.9
Other public-order	18	31.4	6	9.5	7	11.5	35.7
Other offenses	24	51.4	10	13.8	15	17.8	50.6
Number of releases	68,868		89,545		64,973		64,089

Note: Data on sentence length were reported for all first releases with sentences of more than a year for which the most serious offense and sentence length were reported. Time served in prison only was based on first releases with data on most serious offense and time served in prison. Time served in jail and prison was based on those cases with known conviction offenses

where both jail time credited to prison sentence and time served in prison were reported. The percent of sentence served is calculated for those cases where both sentence length and time served in jail and prison were reported.
*Excludes persons sentenced to life in prison or death.

Time served in local jails

In 1984 released offenders were credited with an average of 3.8 months toward their prison sentences for time spent in jail prior to conviction or while awaiting transfer to prison. Violent offenders released from prison had an average of 4.7 months of credited jail time, compared to 3.3 months for property offenders, 3.2 months for drug offenders, and 2.8 months for public-order offenders.

Murderers, with an average of 9.3 months of jail time, and those convicted of manslaughter, with an average of 5.9 months, received the largest amount of jail credit. Public-order offenders (except those convicted of weapons offenses), those sentenced for drug possession, and other drug offenders received the lowest average credits for time spent in jail.

Sex

Among first releases in 1984, a higher percentage of men than women were serving prison sentences for a violent crime (table 5). The one exception was for manslaughter: 4.8% of the women and 2.5% of the men released had been serving time for this offense. A higher percentage of women than men were serving sentences for a property crime. Forty-two percent of all women had committed larceny/theft or fraud, compared to 17.2% of the men. The most common property offense committed by men was burglary, constituting nearly a quarter of all male first releases but only a fifteenth of the female first releases. Drug offenses were more common among women (13.8%) than men (10.3%).

Men released from prison generally had served longer than women for each offense. However, for those convicted of motor vehicle theft and "other violent offenses," time served was the same. Men had served a median of 8 months longer for violent crimes, 6 months longer for public-order crimes, 4 months longer for property crimes, and 2 months longer for drug crimes. The most notable differences were for murder (28 months), robbery (9 months), and kidnaping (9 months).

Race

The offense distribution for persons released from prison in 1984 varied considerably by race. A higher percentage of blacks than whites had been released for a violent crime (table 6). With the exception of robbery, however, there was little difference in the percentages of blacks and whites convicted of individual violent offenses.

The distribution for property offenses was generally the same between the two racial groups. Drug offenses, however, were more prevalent among whites (12%) than blacks (8.7%).

Black offenders released from prison in 1984 had served a median of 18 months and a mean of 25.2 months in prison. The median was 1 month longer and the mean 3.1 months longer than for whites. This difference between the races is largely attributable to the higher percentage of blacks that had been imprisoned for violent offenses.

For specific violent offenses blacks served more time in prison than whites for all offenses except assault, where the median time served was the same. This is in part due to differences in

Table 5. First releases from State prisons, 1984: Time served in jail and prison, by offense and sex

Most serious offense	Percent of first releases	Males		Females		
		Time served in jail and prison Median	Mean	Time served in jail and prison Median	Mean	
All offenses	100%	18 months	24.0 months	100%	12 months	15.9 months
Violent offenses	32.1	29	36.2	22.4	21	25.6
Murder	1.8	80	87.5	1.9	52	57.6
Manslaughter	2.5	33	36.3	4.8	25	27.8
Kidnaping	.6	32	38.6	.4	23	32.1
Rape	1.9	44	49.3	.1	—	—
Other sexual assault	2.9	26	31.4	.4	20	21.2
Robbery	14.1	30	35.9	7.7	21	24.2
Assault	7.3	23	26.7	5.9	15	18.2
Other violent	1.0	16	19.7	1.2	16	18.3
Property offenses	47.0	15	18.9	53.2	11	13.4
Burglary	23.2	17	20.7	6.7	14	15.4
Larceny/theft	12.4	13	16.6	23.6	10	12.5
Motor vehicle theft	1.8	14	16.4	.6	14	15.3
Arson	.9	19	23.6	1.0	14	17.1
Fraud	4.8	13	17.1	18.5	12	13.9
Stolen property	2.7	13	17.3	2.1	8	10.9
Other property	1.2	12	17.0	.6	6	8.0
Drug offenses	10.3	14	17.0	13.8	12	14.7
Possession	2.2	12	14.2	3.1	10	11.6
Trafficking	5.5	16	18.2	6.1	13	14.8
Other drug	2.6	13	16.6	4.6	12	16.5
Public-order offenses	8.7	10	13.7	8.1	4	7.0
Weapons	1.7	15	18.1	.7	10	14.0
Other public-order	7.1	8	12.0	7.5	3	6.2
Other offenses	2.0	15	17.9	2.5	13	16.2
Number of releases	83,583	60,169		6,315	4,799	

Note: Data on offense distributions are based on all first releases with sentences of more than a year for which the most serious offense and sex were known. Time served is calculated for those cases where offense, prior jail time credited to prison sentence, and time served in prison were all reported. —Too few cases for reliable calculations.

Table 6. First releases from State prisons, 1984: Time served in jail and prison, by offense and race

Most serious offense	Percent of first releases	Whites		Blacks		
		Time served in jail and prison Median	Mean	Time served in jail and prison Median	Mean	
All offenses	100%	17 months	22.1 months	100%	18 months	25.2 months
Violent offenses	20.1	27	33.3	35.2	31	38.4
Murder	1.6	72	79.8	2.0	65	91.7
Manslaughter	2.5	29	33.0	2.7	36	38.5
Kidnaping	.6	29	37.0	.6	34	41.0
Rape	1.6	42	43.9	1.9	47	55.0
Other sexual assault	3.6	24	29.3	1.6	32	36.9
Robbery	10.3	29	33.2	17.8	31	37.4
Assault	6.8	22	25.9	7.6	22	26.5
Other violent	1.1	15	18.2	.9	18	21.4
Property offenses	48.1	15	18.3	46.7	15	18.7
Burglary	23.5	17	20.2	20.1	17	21.2
Larceny/theft	11.6	13	15.9	15.2	12	16.2
Motor vehicle theft	1.9	14	16.7	1.6	14	16.0
Arson	1.2	10	23.3	.6	21	22.5
Fraud	6.2	13	16.0	5.1	13	16.9
Stolen property	2.4	12	16.2	3.1	14	17.7
Other property	1.3	11	15.6	1.0	13	17.8
Drug offenses	12.0	14	16.5	8.7	13	17.1
Possession	2.2	12	13.3	2.3	12	14.8
Trafficking	6.2	16	17.9	4.7	15	17.7
Other drug	3.6	13	16.0	1.0	13	18.2
Public-order offenses	9.4	9	13.0	7.7	10	13.6
Weapons	1.3	16	18.8	1.9	14	17.2
Other public-order	8.1	8	11.5	5.8	6	11.5
Other offenses	2.3	15	17.4	1.7	14	18.8
Number of releases	48,244	36,048		39,739	27,396	

Note: Data on offense distributions are based on all first releases with sentences of more than a year for which the most serious offense and race were known. Time served is calculated for those cases where offense, prior jail time credited to prison sentence, and time served in prison were all reported.

prior records for felony incarcerations between blacks and whites and their geographic distribution.³

Among property offenders blacks served a longer median time than whites for arson, stolen property, and other property crimes; whites served longer for larceny/theft. There was no racial difference in the median times served for motor vehicle theft, burglary, and fraud. Black offenders served a median of 1 month less for drug offenses and 1 month more for public-order offenses than did whites.

Prior felony incarceration

A quarter of all prisoners first released in 1984 had previously served time for a felony offense (table 7). Recidivism was most common among public-order offenders (38.1%) and least common among violent offenders (17.3%). Nearly a third of those released who had been convicted of a property crime had a prior felony incarceration.

For every crime except the category of other property crimes, a higher percentage of men than women had a prior felony incarceration. Recidivists were also more common among blacks than whites. For every individual crime except arson the percentage of blacks with a prior felony incarceration exceeded that of whites. Since offenders with prior incarceration histories receive longer sentences, this may help to explain the difference in median time served for violent crimes between the races.

Released inmates who had a prior felony incarceration had received sentences that averaged about a third, or 18 months, longer than those with no prior felony incarceration (table 8). The sentences averaged 38 months longer for violent crimes, 17 months longer for property crimes, 16 months longer for drug crimes, and 4 months longer for public-order crimes.

For every crime but murder those with a prior felony incarceration received longer sentences. The largest difference was for kidnapers: Those with a prior felony incarceration received a sentence of 193 months, compared to 71 months for those with no prior history. For the crimes of manslaughter, rape, and robbery the difference was at least 50 months.

Although the sentences received by those with prior felony incarcerations were considerably longer than for those

³See below; also see *Prison Admissions and Releases, 1983*, BJS Special Report, NCJ-100582, March 1986, p. 5.

Table 7. First releases from State prisons, 1984: Percent of first releases with a prior felony incarceration history, by offense, sex, and race

Most serious offense	Percent of first releases with a prior felony incarceration				
	Total	Sex		Race	
		Male	Female	White	Black
All offenses	25.6%	26.2%	19.1%	21.9%	31.0%
Violent offenses	17.3	17.7	11.6	14.7	20.7
Murder	12.4	13.2	3.2	10.6	14.3
Manslaughter	12.9	13.7	7.0	9.7	17.6
Kidnaping	13.1	13.4	6.7	12.9	14.3
Rape	13.1	13.1	0	12.2	13.0
Other sexual assault	11.7	11.0	0	10.7	14.4
Robbery	18.7	19.0	12.3	16.7	20.7
Assault	20.6	20.9	17.2	16.7	26.2
Other violent	26.6	27.8	16.7	21.4	37.1
Property offenses	30.9	31.7	22.1	25.0	30.3
Burglary	27.3	27.7	10.7	22.9	34.2
Larceny/theft	37.3	38.8	27.6	31.0	44.4
Motor vehicle theft	25.0	26.3	0	20.0	33.3
Arson	19.9	21.1	7.5	18.9	19.7
Fraud	33.2	37.5	20.9	28.8	40.3
Stolen property	39.1	40.2	23.9	30.8	47.3
Other property	22.2	21.7	33.3	19.4	25.2
Drug offenses	22.0	22.9	14.2	18.4	26.4
Possession	30.1	31.0	22.8	26.0	35.1
Trafficking	20.7	21.5	12.5	17.1	27.6
Other drug	14.9	15.8	9.8	12.6	19.1
Public-order offenses	38.1	38.6	32.9	36.4	41.3
Weapons	31.4	31.7	22.2	27.0	37.0
Other public-order	48.0	40.7	34.0	38.5	43.2
Other offenses	11.2	11.6	6.2	9.6	14.4
Number of releases	51,191	47,335	3,852	28,628	21,489

Note: Data on prior felony incarcerations were reported for 56% of the first releases in 1984 with sentences of more than a year. The "Total" category includes information on persons of "other races" as well as those whose race and sex were not known.

Table 8. First releases from State prisons, 1984: Effect of prior felony incarceration on mean sentence length and time served

Most serious offense	Mean sentence length*		Mean time served in jail and prison	
	Prior felony incarceration	No prior felony incarceration	Prior felony incarceration	No prior felony incarceration
	All offenses	73.5 months	55.6 months	24.8 months
Violent offenses	113.4	75.3	42.0	36.0
Murder	190.1	239.6	90.8	66.7
Manslaughter	136.1	74.8	44.2	35.0
Kidnaping	193.4	70.8	48.2	42.6
Rape	142.6	89.2	57.8	48.6
Other sexual assault	106.4	90.6	41.7	31.5
Robbery	122.9	70.7	44.9	34.1
Assault	80.3	53.3	27.6	26.7
Other violent	54.7	41.0	24.8	19.3
Property offenses	61.1	44.4	21.3	17.8
Burglary	64.8	47.8	24.3	19.5
Larceny/theft	68.8	38.0	18.0	15.6
Motor vehicle theft	47.4	31.3	18.7	16.8
Arson	80.5	70.3	24.9	22.9
Fraud	56.3	44.4	19.3	15.0
Stolen property	55.2	41.4	18.3	15.4
Other property	62.8	41.5	14.4	16.1
Drug offenses	61.9	45.7	18.1	17.2
Possession	42.1	31.5	14.6	14.1
Trafficking	64.5	51.7	19.1	17.9
Other drug	79.1	39.0	20.3	18.8
Public-order offenses	41.2	37.4	12.3	12.7
Weapons	40.4	33.2	16.9	18.1
Other public-order	41.0	40.6	11.2	10.9
Other offenses	28.0	26.0	21.8	17.0
Number of releases	7,885	31,327	11,975	37,424

Note: Of the 51,191 first releases with sentences of more than a year who had information on offense and prior felony history, 77% had data on sentence length and 96% on time served in jail and prison.

*Sentence length refers to the total maximum sentence imposed for the most serious conviction offense. Mean sentence length excludes those with sentences of life in prison or death.

without, the mean time served prior to release was about the same (24.8 months vs. 24.1 months). For specific offense categories, however, those with prior incarcerations served more time in prison than those without prior incarcerations. For violent offenders with a prior felony incarceration the time served was 6 months longer; for property offenders the increase in time served was 3 months; and for drug offenders, 1 month. Murder, other sexual assaults, robbery, and other drug offenses showed the biggest increase in time served, 10 months, followed by rape with a 9-month increase.

Minimum time to be served

For those admitted to State prisons in 1984, correctional officials estimated a minimum time that would be served before prisoners would be eligible for release. Factors used in this estimate include minimum sentence length, good-time credits, earned-time credits, parole eligibility requirements, and early release allowances.

In the reporting States the median minimum time to be served by persons entering prison in 1984 was 23 months; the mean minimum time was 40.3 months (table 9). Violent offenders were expected to serve a median of 35 months in prison, twice as long as for either property or drug offenders and three times as long as for public-order offenders. The minimum time to be served was greatest for murder, rape, manslaughter, and kidnaping. Persons convicted of motor vehicle theft could expect to spend the least amount of time in prison, 11 months.

In 1984 the median minimum time to be served by all offenders was an estimated 2 months longer than it was for those entering prison in 1983. The expected median minimum time to be served by violent offenders was 1 month shorter than it was for violent offenders who entered prison in 1983. For property and drug offenders the minimum time expected to be served went up between 1983 and 1984. For public-order offenders median minimum time remained the same.

**Table 9. Admissions to State prisons, 1983 and 1984:
Minimum time to be served prior to release, by offense**

Most serious offense	Minimum time to be served ^a			
	1984		1983	
	Median	Mean ^b	Median	Mean ^b
All offenses	23 months	40.3 months	21 months	41.2 months
Violent offenses	35	63.3	36	64.9
Murder	180	206.1	180	184.2
Manslaughter	49	65.6	33	45.1
Kidnaping	48	81.0	47	79.3
Rape	52	83.3	47	84.1
Other sexual assault	29	52.7	34	57.6
Robbery	35	50.4	34	57.6
Assault	24	38.9	25	45.8
Other violent	14	24.3	13	19.4
Property offenses	17	27.7	16	27.4
Burglary	21	32.2	19	29.4
Larceny/theft	12	23.0	12	23.5
Motor vehicle theft	11	17.5	13	21.2
Arson	23	34.6	19	32.0
Fraud	15	25.0	16	27.7
Stolen property	15	23.5	18	32.5
Other property	12	25.9	13	19.9
Drug offenses	18	30.5	15	27.4
Possession	17	28.9	16	25.2
Trafficking	23	32.4	14	22.7
Other drug	17	27.3	19	41.4
Public-order offenses	12	25.0	12	26.4
Weapons	18	25.0	15	21.9
Other public-order	12	25.0	11	29.0
Other offenses	20	29.1	23	29.1
Number of releases	66,967		24,824	

Note: The minimum time to be served is the jurisdiction's estimate of the shortest time that each admitted prisoner with a sentence of more than a year must serve before becoming eligible for release.

^aIncludes jail time credited toward the sentence.
^bExcludes those with a minimum sentence of life in prison or death.

**Table 10. Parole releases, 1984:
Method of parole discharge, by sex and race**

Method of parole release	All releases	Percent of persons discharged from parole				
		Sex		Race		
		Male	Female	White	Black	Other
All parole releases	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Successful completion	75.5	75.0	84.1	79.4	72.2	76.1
Absconded	1.4	1.4	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.2
Return to jail or prison*	21.2	21.7	13.6	17.6	24.6	21.1
Other	1.9	1.9	1.2	1.6	2.0	1.6
Number of releases	59,247	55,343	3,904	30,864	25,509	574

Note: Data are based on persons who had received sentences of more than a year and include those on supervised release even if not technically termed "parole."

*Includes those returned to jail or prison with a new sentence, technical parole violators, and those returned pending parole revocation.

Parolees discharged in 1984

Among individuals discharged from parole in 1984, 75% of the men and 84.1% of the women completed the full term of parole (table 10). About 21.7% of the men and 13.6% of the women discharged from parole were returned to custody for violating the conditions of their release. About 1% of each group absconded prior to parole termination.

Approximately 79.4% of whites and 72.2% of blacks who were discharged from parole had successfully completed parole supervision. About 1.4% of each group absconded before their terms had expired. A higher percentage of blacks

than whites (24.6% vs. 17.6%) were discharged from supervision for violating parole conditions, either by committing a new crime or breaking the conditional requirements of their release.

Total time under supervision

The total amount of time served in prison (including jail credits) and on parole by an inmate for a violent offense was estimated to be a mean of 60 months; for a drug offense, 42 months; for a property offense, 37 months; and for a public-order offense, 34 months (table 11).

For each offense, discharged parolees spent about three-fifths of the total time under supervision in confinement (jail or prison); and they spent about two-fifths of the time in the community (parole). Murderers served a smaller percentage of their sentences on parole than other types of offenders, followed by rapists and those convicted of other sexual assaults. Inmates convicted of drug possession, larceny, or burglary served a higher percentage of their sentences on parole. In general, however, the proportion of the sentence spent on parole did not vary greatly among offenses.

Except for motor vehicle theft and other drug offenses, unsuccessful parolees discharged in 1984 had spent a longer time in jail and prison before being granted parole than had discharged parolees who were successful (table 12). Drug offenders who failed on parole had spent 7 more months in jail and prison than drug offenders who were successful on parole; public-order offenders who failed on parole had spent 6 months more in prison; violent offenders, 5 months more; and property offenders, 2 months more. The most pronounced difference among individual crimes was for kidnaping (19 months). Unsuccessful parole releases who had been convicted of murder, manslaughter, and "other violent offenses" had all spent at least 11 months longer in confinement than those released successfully from parole.

These differences may reflect the fact that those who did not successfully complete parole generally had more serious criminal histories. They may have been incarcerated longer because (1) they initially had longer sentences, (2) they earned less good-time or other credits while in prison, or (3) they were not released as early by parole boards.

Table 11. Parole releases, 1984: Time under correctional supervision for those who successfully completed parole

Most serious offense	Mean time under correctional supervision			Percent of total time spent on parole
	Total	Jail and prison	Parole	
All offenses	46 months	27 months	19 months	41%
Violent offenses	60	36	24	40
Murder	115	77	38	33
Manslaughter	63	37	26	41
Kidnaping	58	35	23	40
Rape	74	48	26	35
Other sexual assault	54	34	20	37
Robbery	60	35	25	42
Assault	46	28	18	39
Other violent	41	25	16	39
Property offenses	37	21	16	43
Burglary	38	21	17	45
Larceny/theft	33	18	15	45
Motor vehicle theft	42	25	17	40
Arson	47	28	19	40
Fraud	38	22	16	42
Stolen property	34	19	15	44
Other property	33	16	17	52
Drug offenses	42	24	18	43
Possession	34	18	16	47
Trafficking	46	27	19	41
Other drug	37	21	16	43
Public-order offenses	34	20	14	41
Weapons	43	26	17	40
Other public-order	29	16	13	45
Other offenses	37	20	17	46

Note: Data on offense distribution and mean time served are based on the 41,514 successful parole releases who had entered prison with sentences of more than a year. Data include those on supervised release even if not technically termed "parole."

Table 12. Parole releases, 1984: Time served in jail and prison for those discharged from parole

Most serious offense	Mean time served in jail and prison before first release for:	
	Those who successfully completed parole	Those who failed to successfully complete parole
All offenses	27 months	31 months
Violent offenses	36	41
Murder	77	88
Manslaughter	37	49
Kidnaping	35	54
Rape	48	53
Other sexual assault	34	39
Robbery	35	39
Assault	28	30
Other violent	25	37
Property offenses	21	23
Burglary	21	24
Larceny/theft	19	21
Motor vehicle theft	25	19
Arson	28	32
Fraud	22	26
Stolen property	19	23
Other property	16	18
Drug offenses	24	31
Possession	18	23
Trafficking	27	36
Other drug	21	21
Public-order offenses	20	26
Weapons	26	28
Other public-order	16	23
Other offenses	20	22

Note: Time served in jail and prison is based on parole releases who had entered prison with sentences of more than a year and include those on supervised release even if not technically termed "parole."

Time to failure

Those who did not successfully complete parole served an average of 18 months on parole prior to parole revocation (figure 1). Drug offenders had been on parole an average of 23 months prior to revocation, followed by violent offenders (22 months), public-order offenders (18 months), and property offenders (15 months). Serious violent offenders convicted of murder, manslaughter, and rape had been on parole for the longest average periods of time prior to revocation; offenders convicted of arson, stolen property, or assault had been on parole the shortest average amount of time.

The average amount of time on parole prior to revocation may be a reflection of a longer exposure time under community supervision. The average violent offender released from prison had received a mean sentence of 92 months and at prison release had served about half his or her sentence in confinement, with the remainder to be served on parole (table 4). A property offender, on the other hand, had received a mean sentence of 53 months and had also served about half of it in jail and prison. Thus, the violent offender would be expected to be on parole about twice as long as the property offender. The mean time to failure may reflect this longer period on parole, such that the longer the exposure time on parole, the longer the mean time to failure.

Methodology

Reporting criteria

The National Corrections Reporting Program collected data on all prison admissions, prison releases, and parole releases for calendar year 1984. NCRP data covered prisoners admitted to or released from custody regardless of the jurisdiction where the prisoner was sentenced. Beginning in 1983 all sentenced inmates, including those with sentences of a year or less, were counted. However, only inmates with sentences of more than a year were included in the 1984 report in order to assure greater comparability across jurisdictions. Information on all inmates, including those with sentences of a year or less, is contained in the public use data tape. Persons who were sentenced to a State prison but were admitted to or released from the custody of a local jail were included in the NCRP. Multiple admissions or releases per person during the year were recorded as separate events.

**Unsuccessful parole releases, 1984:
Mean time spent on parole before failure,
by offense**

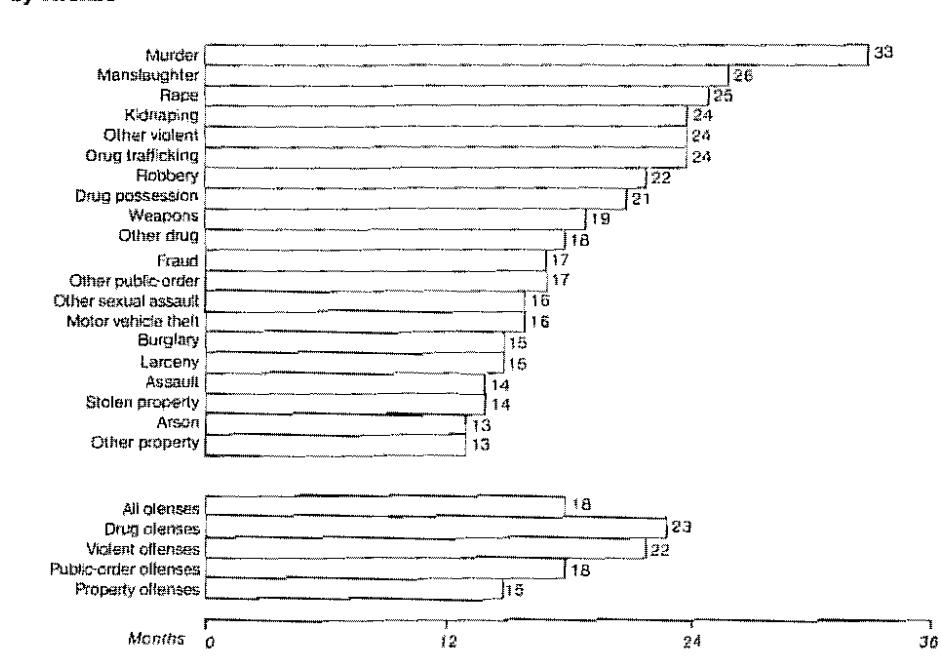


Figure 1

Offenses

Each State's offenses were recoded to a common set of offense codes. In this report, attempts and conspiracies were included with completed offenses, with the exception of attempted murders and conspiracies to commit murder, which were classified as assaults.

Offense types appearing in this report included the following offenses:

Murder--homicide, nonnegligent manslaughter, and felony murder.

Manslaughter--manslaughter, vehicular manslaughter, and negligent homicide.

Rape--forcible rape, aggravated rape, and sexual intercourse without consent.

Other sexual assault--statutory rape, carnal abuse, gross sexual imposition by force, sodomy, fondling, child molestation, and lewd acts with children.

Robbery--unarmed robbery, armed robbery, aggravated robbery, and purse snatching.

Assault--attempted murder, simple assault, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, vehicular assault, and criminal injury to persons.

Kidnaping--abduction, kidnaping, and felonious restraint.

Other violent--extortion, intimidation, hit-and-run driving, child abuse, and criminal endangerment against a person.

Burglary--breaking and entering, burglary, and safecracking.

Arson--arson and burning a thing of value.

Motor vehicle theft--auto theft, conversion of an automobile, receiving and transferring a stolen vehicle, unauthorized use of a vehicle, and unauthorized entry of a vehicle.

Fraud--worthless checks, uttering, obtaining money by false pretenses, credit card fraud, counterfeiting, and embezzlement.

Larceny--theft, petty larceny, and grand larceny.

Stolen property--possession, transportation, receiving, or selling of stolen property.

Other property--destruction of property, vandalism, eriminal tampering, trespassing, entering without breaking, and possession of burglary tools.

Drug possession--possession or use of controlled substances.

Drug trafficking--importation, manufacture, sale, or delivery of controlled substances; possession with intent to sell.

Other drug--forging or uttering a false prescription for a controlled substance; possession of drug paraphernalia.

Weapon--unlawful sale, distribution, manufacture, transportation, or possession of a deadly or dangerous weapon.

Other public-order--escape from custody, court offenses, obstruction, driving while intoxicated, other traffic offenses, drunkenness, disorderly conduct, morals and decency violations, and commercialized vice.

Other offenses--juvenile offenses and unspecified felonies.

Sentences

Data on sentence length refer to the offense with the longest sentence. Whenever a sentence had both a minimum and a maximum term, the maximum was used to define the sentence length.

Time served

Time served refers to the amount of time spent in prison between the date of admission and the date of release or to the amount of time spent on parole between the date of prison release and the date of parole discharge. Where indicated, jail time credited to the prison sentence for the current offense was added to time spent in prison to obtain time served. Total time under supervision was calculated by adding the credited jail time, time spent in prison, and time spent on parole.

Median and mean

The medians in this report were calculated from ungrouped data, since sentencing data do not conform to the standard assumptions permitting calculations from grouped data. Because nearly all sentences are multiples of 12-month units, the assumption of an even distribution of values within groups is not met. Therefore, a shift of only a few cases may increase or decrease the median by 12 months.

In contrast to the calculation of medians, mean sentence lengths excluded prisoners with sentences of life in prison or death. Medians are sensitive to the uneven distribution of cases; means are strongly influenced by extreme values. Because of the limitations of each measure, both means and medians were reported for sentence length.

Time-served data do not group at 12-month intervals. Both medians and means have been reported in most tables to provide a more accurate summary of the data.

Year-to-year comparisons

Care should be exercised when comparing 1984 data on sentence lengths and time served to data published for 1983 and previous years. In 1983 NCRP introduced new reporting criteria and different computational procedures. The 1983 report included all inmates regardless of sentence length; in 1984 the report is restricted to inmates with sentences of more than a year.

Also, the group of States reporting in 1984 differed from the previous year. States participating in the 1984 program were Alabama, California, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The 1983 report did not include Hawaii, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. Washington, which was included in 1983, did not report in 1984.

Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Reports are prepared principally by BJS staff. This report was written by Stephanie Minor-Harper and Christopher A. Innes. Frank D. Balog edited the report. Report production was administered by Marilyn Marbrook, publications unit chief, assisted by Jeanne Harris, Betty Sherman, Sara E. Smith, and Yvonne Shields. Data were collected and processed by Stephanie Brown, Kevin Baker, and other staff of the U.S. Bureau of the Census under the supervision of Diana Cull, Larry McGinn, and Gertrude Odom.

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The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, coordinates the activities of the following program offices and bureaus: the Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

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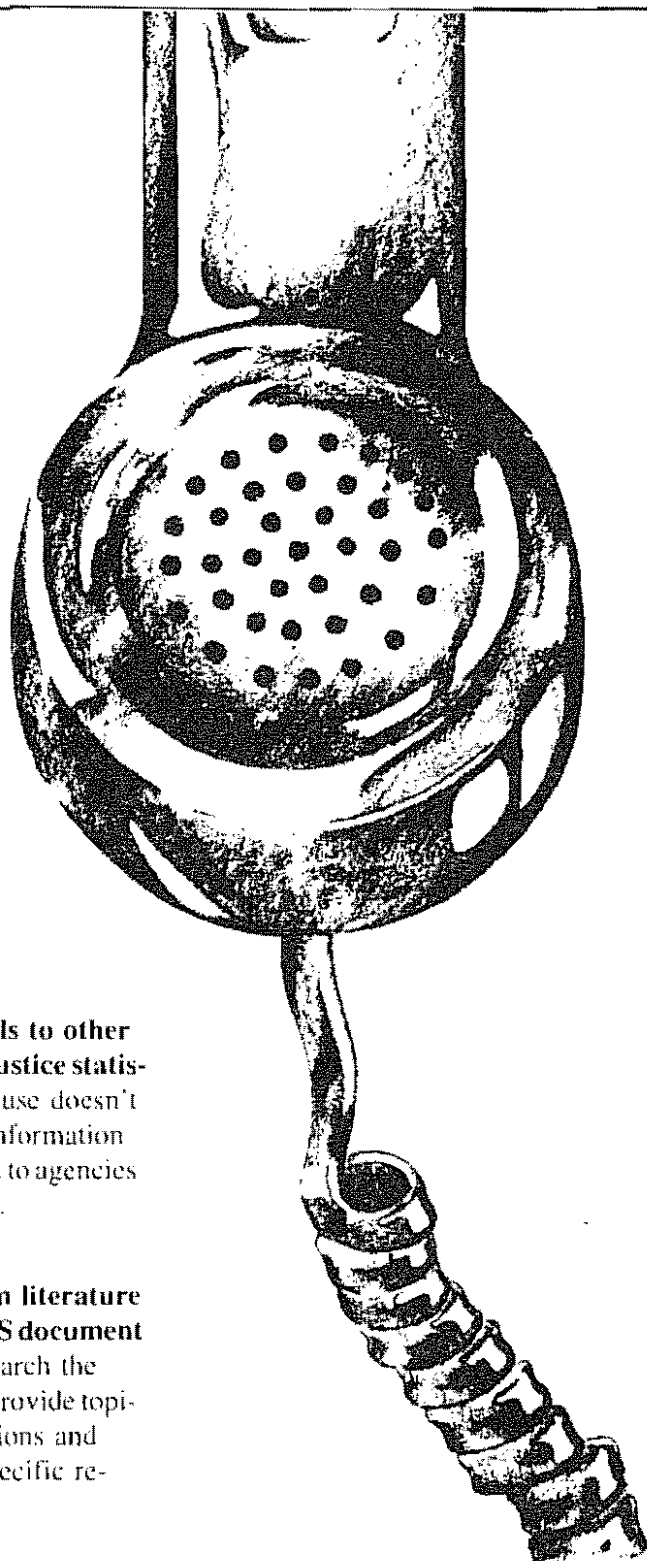
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(revised January 1988)

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DC household victimization survey data base:
Study implementation, NCJ-98595, \$7.60
Documentation, NCJ-98596, \$6.40
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