A Statistical Description of Releases From Massachusetts Correctional Institutions During 1991

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Abstract

This report presents a statistical description of the 3,293 releases to the street from the Massachusetts Department of Correction during 1991. This report also presents information on trends among releases over the last five years. Highlights from this report include the following:

- The 3,293 releases in 1991 represent a decrease of 542 (14 percent) from the number of releases during 1990, but an increase of 209 (7 percent) from the number of releases during 1987.
- For the first time since 1980, the number of releases from the Department has decreased.
- The number of males released during 1991 decreased by 13 percent from 1990, while the number of females released during 1991 decreased by 18 percent from 1990.
- Forty-eight percent of all releases were by parole and 52 percent were by good conduct discharge or expiration of sentence. The number of releases by parole during 1991 is 28 percent lower than the number for 1990, while the number of releases by sentence expiration and discharge increased by four percent during the year.
- Fifty percent were released from maximum or medium security facilities and 50
 percent were released from lower security facilities. Many of the releases from
 secure facilities were females serving county sentences or male parole violators.
- The average time served was 47.7 months for individuals serving Cedar Junction sentences, 27.2 months for individuals serving Concord sentences, and 8.0 months for individuals serving Framingham sentences.

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Introduction

This report is a statistical description of releases to the street from facilities of the Massachusetts Department of Correction during 1991. The tables which follow contain information on the nature of the present offense, personal background characteristics, criminal history, furlough program participation and release characteristics for these individuals. The information contained in these tables was derived from the computerized inmate data base and was produced by the Operations Research Unit on the Department of Correction VAX Computer. Information is also reported on trends in the release population over the last five years, 1987 to 1991.

Only those individuals who were released to the street by the authority of the Parole Board, by expiration of sentence, or by a certificate of discharge are included in the report. Individuals who were released to another correctional authority or to another sentence are not included. Individuals who were released by any means other than parole, discharge or expiration (such as releases by court order, death, or escape) are not included in the report. Individuals transferred to other correctional authorities to serve their sentences who were subsequently released are not included in the report; individuals transferred from other authorities who were subsequently released from a DOC facility are included in the report. Individuals who were released more than once during 1991 are counted as

multiple cases in the report.

In reading the tables in this report, the reader should note the following: (1) the release population is divided according to the institution of release; (2) the left number in each cell, in the column marked "N", represents the number of individuals who fall in the corresponding category in the table; (3) the right number in each cell, in the column marked "%", represents the percentage of the number of individuals in a particular category to the total number of releases from that institution (column percents).

For example, upon referring to the table on pages 21-23, type of release is presented and the following types of information can be obtained: (1) the number of releases from each facility in 1991, and (2) the number and percentage of releases from each institution who were released by expiration of sentence, parole and good conduct discharge.

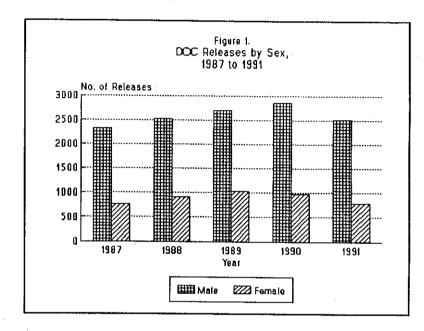
The reader should note that the number in the unknown category is relatively high for certain variables, specifically certain social history and criminal history variables. In the text of this report, percentages are based on the number of cases for which the information for the social or criminal history variable is known, while in the tables the percentages are based on the total number of cases which includes the cases with unknown information.

Releases From the DOC, 1987 to 1991

During 1991, there were 3,293 releases from the DOC. This is a 14 percent decrease from the 3,835 releases during 1990, and a 7 percent increase from the 3.084 releases that occurred in 1987. This is the first year since 1980 that the number of releases has decreased when compared to the number for the prior year. Figure 1 shows the numbers of male releases and female releases for each year during 1987 to 1991. The number of male releases increased each year from 1987 to 1990, and then decreased in 1991. The number of female releases increased between 1987 and 1989, and then decreased in 1990 and 1991. During 1991, there were 2,500 male releases and 793 female releases. The figure for male releases is 8 percent higher than the number of male releases during 1987 (2319), and the figure for female releases is 4 percent higher than the number of female releases during 1987 (765). Table 1 (on pages 9 through 11) shows selected characteristics of releases for each year in this period.

In 1991, 41 percent of all males were released from maximum or medium security facilities and 59 percent were released from lower security facilities. The proportion of male releases that

For the purposes of this report, all releases from Bay State Correctional Center are categorized as releases from Minimum Security, all releases from Shirley are categorized as releases from Minimum/Pre-Release Security, and all releases from South Middlesex are categorized as releases from Pre-Release Security.



were released from maximum or medium security facilities has decreased each year after reaching a peak of 48 percent in 1988. In contrast, 79 percent of the female releases were released from higher security facilities and 21 percent from lower security facilities. This figure remains in the range established during 1987-1990 when the proportion of female releases from maximum or medium security facilities increased from 76% to 82%.

Information in Table 1 regarding type of sentence shows that most males released from the DOC during the five year period were serving state prison or reformatory sentences. The proportion of males released from the DOC who were serving county sentences increased during 1987-1988 and has decreased since 1989. Most females released from the DOC were serving county sentences. The proportion of females who were released on state prison or reformatory sentences varied from 12 percent to 15 percent during 1987 - 1990. In 1991, this proportion increased to 21 percent.

¹ Table 2 on page 12 shows the DOC facilities categorized by security level. During 1991, the following changes occurred:

^{1.} Boston Correctional Center closed on July 15, 1991,

^{2.} The security level designation for Bay State Correctional Center changed from Minimum to Medium on July 10, 1991,

^{3.} The security level designation for South Middlesex PRC changed from Pre-Release to Minimum/Pre-Release on June 19, 1991,

^{4.} A Medium security facility opened adjacent to the already existing Shirley Minimum/Pre-Release on July 16, 1991.

The type of release is also shown in Table 1. During 1991, 55 percent of male releases were released by parole, and 26 percent of female releases were released by parole. For both males, and females, these proportions are lower than the corresponding proportions for any year since 1987.

The average time served is related to the institution to which the individual was committed. For 1991 releases the average time served for a Cedar Junction sentence was 47.7 months, the average time served for a Concord sentence was 27.2 months and the average time served for a Framingham sentence was 8.0 months. During 1987-1990, time served for Cedar Junction sentences has fluctuated between 48.6 months and 54.0 months. The average time served for 1991 releases of 47.7 months is the lowest that this figure has been since 1987. For Concord sentences, average time served has

fluctuated between 19.1 months and 27.4 months during 1987 to 1990. The average time served for 1991 releases of 27.2 months falls in the high end of this range. Time served for Framingham commitments has fluctuated between 6 months and 8 months during 1987 to 1990. The 1991 figure of 8 months is at the high point of this range.

For the first time since 1980, the number of releases from the Department has decreased. Most of this decrease can be attributed to the reduction in the number of paroles that occured during 1991. The number of releases by parole during 1991 is 27 percent lower than the number for 1990, while the number of releases by sentence expiration and discharge increased by four percent during the year.

Table 1.

Selected Characteristics of Releases, 1987 to 1991

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
' <u>ex</u>					
Male	2319	2530	2706	2862	2500
Semale	765	916	1031	973	793
'otal	3084	3446	3737	3835	3293
Security Level Released From	•				
Males	•				
Maximum	133	140	144	139	94
Medium	856	1071	1104	1101	937
	4000	4440	1106		
ower	1030	1110	1186	1314	1243
	1030 300	1110 209	272	1314 308	1243 226
Contract				308 2862	1243 226 2500
Contract Subtotal	300	209	272	308	226
Contract Subtotal Females	300	209	272	308	226 2500
Contract Subtotal Semales Maximum	300 2319	209 2530	272 2706	308 2862 0	226 2500 0
Contract Subtotal Semales Maximum Medium	300 2319	209 2530 0	272 2706	308 2862	226 2500 0 624
Contract Subtotal Females Maximum Medium Lower	300 2319 0 580	209 2530 0 732	272 2706 0 846	308 2862 0 802	226 2500 0
Lower Contract Subtotal Females Maximum Medium Lower Contract Subtotal	300 2319 0 580 155	209 2530 0 732 151	272 2706 0 846 110	308 2862 0 802 107	226 2500 0 624 115

Table 1. (Continued)

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Type of Sentence					
Males					
State Prison	1016	1147	1263	1436	1356
Reformatory	948	959	1055	1053	827
County	355	424	388	373	317
Subtotal	2319	2530	2706	2862	2500
Semales					
tate Prison	44	50	55	63	89
Reformatory	63	60	73	80	76
County	658	806	903	830	628
Subtotal	765	916	1031	973	793
`otal	3084	3446	3737	3835	3293
'ype of Release					
∕lales					
Parole Parole	1481	1581	1703	1848	1367
Expiration/Discharge	838	949	1003	1014	1133
Subtotal	2319	2530	2706	2862	2500
emales					·
Parole	245	275	315	329	208
xpiration/Discharge	520	641	716	644	585
ubtotal	765	916	1031	973	793
'otal	3084	3446	3737	3835	3293

Table 1. (Continued)

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Average Time Served Until First Release by Committing Institution					
Cedar Junction (N)	52.1 Mos	48.6 Mos	54.0 Mos	50.9 Mos	47.7 Mos
	(507)	(532)	(646)	(731)	(817)
Concord	19.2 Mos	19.1 Mos	27.4 Mos	24.3 Mos	27.2 Mos
(N)	(399)	(403)	(460)	(499)	(455)
Framingham	6.1 Mos	6.0 Mos	8.0 Mos	7.0 Mos	8.0 Mos
(N)	(554)	(568)	(669)	(565)	(512)

A Profile of 1991 Releases

This section presents a description of the releases from the Department of Correction during 1991 in terms of release characteristics, offense and sentence characteristics, social background, criminal history and furlough program participation. This information is derived from Tables 2 through 7 in this section and from the tables beginning at page 20 of this report.

Release Characteristics

Tables 2 through 7 present selected characteristics of the offender and the release for 1991 releases.

Institution Released From. Table 2 shows the release institution and security level distributions for male releases and female releases. The security level distributions for male releases

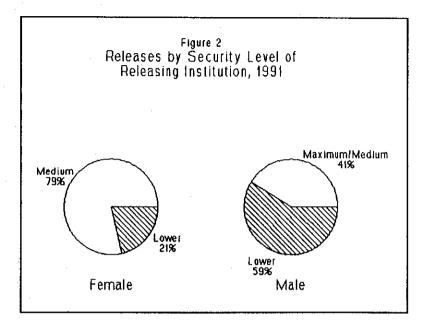
and female releases are also presented in pie charts (Figure 2). For male releases, 41 percent were released from maximum or medium security facilities and 59 percent were released from lower security facilities. In contrast, 79 percent of all females were released from medium security and 21 percent were released from lower security facilities.

Type of Sentence. Table 3 shows the sentence type distributions for male releases and female releases. Figure 3 presents this information graphically. For females, 79% of the releases from the DOC during 1991 were releases from county sentences which are sentences of less than 2-1/2 years, 11 percent were serving state prison sentences, and 10 percent were serving reformatory sentences. In contrast, 13 percent of the male releases were released from county sentences, 54 percent were released from state prison sentences, and 33 percent were released from reformatory sentences.

Table 2.

Security Level and Release Institution by Sex of Offender, 1991 Releases

Security Level and	Ma	les	Fema	ales	Tota	al
Release Institution	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percen
Maximum Security						
Cedar Junction	94	(4)	0	(0)	94	(3)
Subtotal	94	(4)	0	(0)	94	(3)
Medium Security						
Boston CC	76	(3)	. 0	(0)	76	(2)
Concord	187	(7)	0	(0)	187	(6)
Framingham	0	(0)	624	(79)	624	(19)
NCCI	179	(7)	0.	(0)	179	(5)
Norfolk	125	(5)	0	(0)	125	(4)
Old Colony	99	(4)	0	(0)	99	(3)
SECC	271	(11)	0	(0)	271	(8)
Subtotal	937	(37)	624	(79)	1561	(47)
Minimum Security						
Bay State	34	(1)	0	(0)	34	(1)
NCC	108	(4)	0	(0)	108	(3)
Subtotal	142	(6)	0	(0)	142	(4)
Minimum/Pre-Release						
Lancaster	46	(2)	57	(7)	103	(3)
Longwood	281	(11)	47	(6)	328	(10)
Plymouth	127	(5)	0	(0)	127	(4)
Pondville	87	(3)	0	(0)	87	(3)
Shirley	224	(9)	0	(0)	224	(7)
Warwick	32	(1)	0	(0)	· 32	(1)
Subtotal	797	(32)	104	(13)	901	(27)
State Pre-Release		•				
Boston State	61	(2)	0	(0)	61	(2)
Park Drive	103	(4)	11	(1)	114	(3)
S. Middlesex	140	(6)	0	(0)	140	(4)
Subtotal	304	(12)	11	(1)	315	(10)
Contract Pre-Release						
Subtotal	226	(9)	54	(7)	280	(9)
Total	2500	(100)	793	(100)	3293	(100)



Type of Release. Table 4 shows the distributions of release type for both male releases and female release. For males, the most common type of release was parole, accounting for 55 percent of all releases in 1991. In contrast, 26 percent of the females were released by parole. For females, 74 percent of all releases were by expiration of sentence or discharge, while 45 percent of males were released by discharge or expiration of sentence. This information is presented graphically in Figure 4.

Parole Violator Status. Table 5 shows the parole violator status and split sentence status distributions for male releases from secure facilities and for male releases from lower security facilities. This table shows that the security level of the release is related to parole violator status. Parole violators make up a larger proportion of releases from secure facilities than they do of releases from lower security facilities because frequently they return to custody for a short duration, and the brevity of parole violators' incarcerations impedes their transfers to lower security. Of the 1031 male releases from secure facilities, 313 (30%) were parole violators, while of the

1469 male releases from lower security facilities, 148 (10%) were parole violators.

Split Sentences. Some male first releases are individuals who received split sentences. A split sentence is divided into a term of incarceration followed by community supervision by the court. Of the 718 male first releases from secure facilities, 127 (18%) were serving split sentences, while of the 1321 male first releases from lower security facilities, 141 (11%) were serving split sentences. Among parole violators, 13 (4%) of the 313 male releases from secure facilities were serving split sentences, while 6 (4%) of the 148 male releases from lower security facilities were serving split sentences.

Time Served. Table 6 shows time served until first release by committing institution and offense. Time served varies by committing institution: 47.7 months for Cedar Junction, 27.2 months

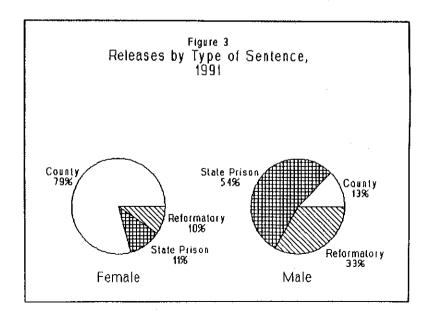


Table 3.

Sentence Type by
Sex of Offender, 1991 Releases

		Males		Females		tal
Sentence Type	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
State Prison	1356	(54)	89	(11)	1445	(44)
Reformatory	827	(33)	76	(10)	903	(44) (27)
County	317	(13)	628	(79)	945	(29)
Total	2500	(100)	793	(100)	3293	(100)

Table 4.

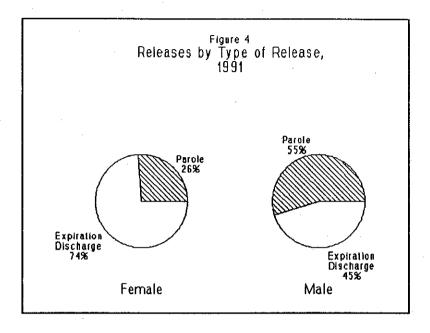
Release Type by
Sex of Offender, 1991 Releases

	Males		Females		Total	
Release Type	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Parole	1367	(55)	208	(26)	1575	(48)
Expiration/Discharge	1133	(45)	585	(74)	1718	(52)
Total	2500	(100)	793	(100)	3293	(100)

Table 5.

Parole Violator Status and Split Sentence Indicator by Security Level of Releasing Institution,
1991 Male Releases

	Secure Facilities		Lower Security			
·			Facilities		Tota	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
arole Violator Status						
First Releases	718	(70)	1321	(90)	2039	(82)
Parole Violators	313	(30)	148	(10)	461	(18)
Total	1031	(100)	1469	(100)	2500	(100)
Parole Violator Status and Split Sentence Indicator						
First Releases						
Split	127	(18)	141	(11)	268	(13)
Other	591	(82)	1180	(89)	1771	(87)
Subtotal	718	(100)	1321	(100)	2039	(100)
Parole Violators						
Split	13	(4)	6	(4)	19	(4)
Other	300	(96)	142	(96)	442	(96)
Subtotal	313	(100)	148	(100)	461	(100)
Total	1031	(100)	1469	(100)	2500	(100)



for Concord and 8.0 months for Framingham. The average time served has decreased for releases who were committed to Cedar Junction when compared to time served for 1990 releases (50.9 months). In contrast, the average time served for Concord and Framingham commitments has increased when compared to time served for Concord (24.3 months) and Framingham (7.0 months) commitments who were released during 1990. Time served also varies by offense category. For example, male releases from Cedar Junction sentences served longest for person offenses (an average of 68.0 months) and shortest for drug offenses (30.4 months); releases from Concord sentences served longest for person offenses (31.8 months) and shortest for drug offenses (19.0 months); and female releases (Framingham commitments) served longest for person offenses (19.5 months) and shortest for offenses in the "other" category (2.9 months).

Nature of Present Offense

Sentencing Courts. Sixty-seven percent of the releases were originally sentenced in Superior Courts including 17 percent from Suffolk Superior Court, 11 percent from Hampden Superior Court, 11 percent from Middlesex Superior Court, and 10 percent from Worcester Superior Court. Twenty-three percent of the releases were sentenced in district or municipal courts. Nine percent were transfers from other jurisdictions (out-of-state, federal, or county inmates).

Jail Credits. Fifty-seven percent of the releases spent time in jail prior to their commitment; 43 percent had spent no time in jail prior to their commitments.

Commitment Institution. Cedar Junction commitments represented 41 percent of all releases; Concord commitments represented 26 percent of all releases and Framingham commitments represented 24 percent of all releases. There were 306 individuals released (9 percent) who were originally committed to another jurisdiction (most of which were Longwood releases).

Sentence. Most releases (56 percent) were serving either reformatory or county sentences. Twelve individuals who were serving life sentences were released in 1991.

Present Offense. Thirty-six percent of the releases were serving sentences for violent offenses (29 percent for person offenses and 8 percent for sex offenses), 19 percent were serving sentences for property offenses, 25 percent for drug offenses, and 19 percent for "other" offenses.

Age at Incarceration. The median age at incarceration for the releases during 1991 was 27 years old.

Table 6.

Mean Time Served Until First Release by Present Offense and Committing Institution, 1991 Releases

	Cedar Junction			Concord			Framingham		
Offense	N	Me		N	Me	an	N	Mea	
General Categories									
Person	273	68.0	Months	187	31.8	Months	42	19.5	Months
Sex	86	63.3	Months	63	29.4	Months	3	19.3	Months
Property	103	38.6	Months	116	23.5	Months	127	6.7	Months
Drug	332	30.4	Months	71	19.0	Months	155	12.0	Months
Other	23	39.8	Months	18	26.3	Months	185	2.9	Months
Total	817	47.7]	Months	455	27.2	Months	512	8.0	Months
Selected Offenses				-					
Manslaughter	35	106.3	Months	2	58.9	Months	3	35.1	Months
Armed Robbery	113	62.3	Months	86	36.5	Months	4	26.9	Months
Unarmed Robbery	28	51.0	Months	38	24.9	Months	3	22.7	Months
Armed Assault	5 1	52.2	Months	38	22.1	Months	7	5.7	Months
Rape of Child	30	51.4	Months	36	29.5	Months	2	27.5	Months
Burglary	65	37.2	Months	48	29.5	Months	16	5.9	Months
Larceny of Property	6	18.8	Months	9	16.7	Months	48	5.9	Months
Receiving Stolen Goods	7	20.4	Months	9	20.5	Months	15	8.8	Months
Controlled Sub (Class-Unknown)	36	31.0	Months	7	50.6	Months	9	21.9	Months
Controlled Sub (Class A)	52	36.6	Months	8	25.5	Months	23	12.8	Months
Controlled Sub									
(Class B)	233	29.4	Months	38	15.7	Months	69	14.0	Months
Prostitution	0	-	N.A.	0		N.A.	34	4.2	Months
O.U.I.	Ö		N.A.	1	24.5	Months	46	3.0	Months
Weapons	21	41.6	Months	14	28.4	Months	10	10.6	Months
Trespassing	0		N.A.	0		N.A.	31	0.1	Month

^{1.} Individuals who were parole violators, were originally committed to another authority or were serving complex sentences (forthwith, split, fines or from & after sentences) were excluded from the analysis.

Offenses were selected based on the frequency with which they appear among the release group.

Personal Background Characteristics

Sex. Seventy-six percent of the releases were male and 24 percent were female.

Race. Fifty-eight percent of the 1991 release group were Caucasian, 25 percent African American, and 17 percent were identified as Hispanic. There were 8 Native Americans and 14 Asians in the release group.

Marital Status. The majority of releases (66 percent) were single at the time of their commitment.

Military Discharge. Of the 2,765 releases for whom military information was known, 88 percent had never served in the military.

Prior Address. The largest group of releases (43 percent) came from the Boston MSA.

Occupation. Most releases whose occupations were known had worked in the areas of manual labor (55 percent) or services (29 percent) prior to commitment.

Education. The median educational level at commitment for the 1991 releases was twelfth grade; 88 percent had achieved a ninth grade or higher level of education; 16 percent had completed a GED; and 8 percent had completed some college or had graduated from college.

Criminal History

Prior Court Appearances. The median age at first court appearance was eighteen years. The median number of court appearances prior to the current commitment was 9. A majority of the releases had previously appeared in court for person offenses (68 percent), property offenses (74 percent) and narcotics offenses (58 percent). A minority had appeared in court for sex offenses (14 percent), alcohol offenses (30 percent) and escapes (7 percent).

Prior Incarcerations. Forty-four percent of the releases during 1991 had prior incarcerations in a house of correction, and 9 percent had prior incarcerations in a state or federal correctional institution. Overall, 46 percent of the releases had served some time in an adult correctional facility for a prior commitment.

Furlough Program Participation

Table 7 shows the furlough program participation distributions for male releases and female releases. Eight percent of the releases had one or more furloughs during their incarceration. Three percent of the releases received earned furloughs only, four percent received emergency escorted furloughs only, and one percent

received both earned and emergency escorted furloughs. Among the male releases, 5 percent had one or more earned furloughs and 6 percent had one or more emergency escorted furloughs. For the female releases, 2 percent had one or more earned furloughs and 3 percent had one or more emergency escorted furloughs. Four releases had one furlough escape during their incarceration.

Table 7.

Furlough Program Participation by Sex of Offender, 1991 Releases

	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
						·
Furlough Program Participation						
No Furloughs	2253	(90)	761	(96)	3014	(92)
Earned Furloughs Only	103	(4)	11	(1)	114	(3)
Emergency Escorted Furloughs Only	117	(5)	19	(2)	136	(4)
Both Earned and Emergency Furloughs	27	(1)	2	(0)	29	(1)
Total	2500	(100)	793	(100)	3293	(100)