

Studying Recidivism

Introduction

The VADOC studies recidivism to gather information on the success of offenders re-entering society once released from State Responsible (SR) incarceration. SR incarceration requires a Virginia felony conviction with a sentence of one year or more or a parole violation with a sentence of two years or more. Recidivism studies can measure a variety of repeat behaviors for a range of follow-up periods. These measures are limited to known behavior that has been captured in data. VADOC routinely studies three standard measures of recidivism—re-arrest, re-conviction, and re-incarceration—for time periods ranging from 6 to 36 months. These measures are consistent with other Virginia criminal justice agencies' standard recidivism measures.

Re-Arrest:

Re-arrest is defined as any arrest reported in the Virginia State Police (VSP) criminal history database for a felony or misdemeanor offense, including supervision violations, within the specified time period after release. Local ordinance violations, such as non-criminal speeding, are not considered re-arrests.

Re-Conviction:

Re-conviction is defined as a conviction resulting from a re-arrest that occurred within the specified time period. The actual conviction may occur outside the specified follow-up period.

Re-Incarceration:

Re-incarceration is defined as any SR re-incarceration within the specified time period.

State Responsible Releases

This report provides information on recidivism of State Responsible (SR) releases. SR releases include all Virginia felons who were sentenced to an incarceration period of one year or more and were released from SR incarceration.

VADOC only includes SR releases who were at liberty and had the opportunity to recidivate. Those excluded from the analysis include SR releases who died in custody or were transferred to another jurisdiction upon release.

State Responsible Releases		
Release Year	Total Releases	Releases in Study
FY2012	11,585	11,496
FY2013	11,661	11,575
FY2014	12,109	12,021
FY2015	12,490	12,385
FY2016	12,650	12,554
FY2017	12,539	12,429
FY2018	12,603	12,502

Releases from Detention and Diversion Centers are studied separately. In addition, recidivism measures for those on community supervision are included in a separate report. Recidivism rates may vary slightly from what was reported in previous versions of this report due to data maturity.

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Recidivism At a Glance

Releases from State
Responsible
Incarceration

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Recidivism at a Glance

Releases from State Responsible Incarceration

Re-Arrest*

By the FY2015 release cohort, re-arrest rates reached their lowest across all time periods except for the 24-month follow-up time period. 18-month re-arrest rates hit their highest point in the FY2014 cohort at 40.2%, but decreased by 3.3 percentage points to 36.9% in the FY2015 cohort. Re-arrest rates for all time periods except for the 6-month follow-up period begin to increase slightly, however, beginning with the FY2016 cohort .

Months since Release	Re-Arrest				
	6	12	18	24	36
FY2012	14.2	28.7	39.6	43.5	56.3
FY2013	15.0	29.7	39.7	43.6	55.9
FY2014	15.2	30.0	40.2	44.3	56.3
FY2015	13.5	27.0	36.9	44.0	53.4
FY2016	13.3	27.3	37.9	45.2	
FY2017	13.6	27.4	37.6		

Re-arrests are reported on VSP criminal history database without delay. Therefore, this measure is immediately available. However, re-arrest is not necessarily indicative of new criminal behavior. Some re-arrests will lead to findings of not guilty or charges being dismissed.

* Re-arrest and re-conviction information is based on August 2019 Virginia State Police (VSP) criminal history data. A new process was established with this study using confirmed State Identification Numbers (SIDs) rather than offender name. The change in matching process may explain minor changes in reporting results.

Re-Conviction*

The FY2015 release cohort has the lowest re-conviction rates for the 6- to 24-month follow-up time periods compared to the previous years' release cohorts. The 18-month re-conviction rate dropped by 2.9 percentage points and the 24-month re-conviction rate also dropped by 3 percentage points between the FY2014 and FY2015 release cohorts . Starting with the FY2015 release cohort, re-conviction rates continue to drop for the 6- and 12-month follow-up periods.

Months since Release	Re-Conviction				
	6	12	18	24	36
FY2012	10.8	22.9	32.6	39.1	48.2
FY2013	11.3	23.6	32.7	39.4	48.6
FY2014	11.5	24.2	33.3	40.0	48.2
FY2015	10.2	21.7	30.4	37.0	
FY2016	9.9	21.6	30.8		
FY2017	9.8	21.1			

Re-convictions are recorded at the conclusion of court proceedings and merged into the VSP database. Because of this processing time lag, the measure is not immediately reportable. However, this measure is indicative of new criminal behavior because the charge is adjudicated in a court of law. The re-conviction rates reported in the table above only consider convictions for offenses that occurred after an offender's release date.

Re-Incarceration†

Re-incarceration rates among the past several release year cohorts have fluctuated. Between the FY2012 and FY2013 release cohorts, the 3-year re-incarceration rate decreased by 1 percentage point to 22.4%, but then returned to FY2012 levels in the FY2014 release cohort. By the FY2015 release cohort, re-incarceration rates fell again, but by 0.3 percentage points. Other follow-up time periods have seen similar patterns in their rates as well.

Months since Release	Re-Incarceration				
	6	12	18	24	36
FY2012	1.3	4.4	9.7	15.0	23.4
FY2013	1.1	4.3	9.6	15.0	22.4
FY2014	1.3	5.0	10.1	15.3	23.4
FY2015	1.5	4.9	9.9	15.0	23.1
FY2016	1.3	5.0	10.1		
FY2017	1.3	4.9			

Re-incarceration is reported once the data is entered into VirginiaCORIS (VADOC's offender management system) following court proceedings. SR incarceration requires a Virginia felony conviction with a sentence of one year or more or a parole violation with a sentence of two years or more. This measure indicates criminal behavior which impacts VADOC bed space needs.

† Due to multiple court-updated New Commitment Dates in the data, re-incarceration rates for the FY2012-2014 release cohorts have been kept constant with the rates reported in the previous year.