

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION  
REVIEW OF CURRENT RESEARCH  
1991, 1992, 1993**

**Prepared by:**

**Janet W. Knight, Ph.D.  
Research Director**

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION**

**Larry DuBois  
Commissioner**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

From 1991 through 1993, the Research Division of the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) produced a number of reports describing the DOC inmate population. This paper presents abstracts of these reports, and summarizes the latest specific findings from each of the studies and statistical reports cited.

In addition to the reports summarized here, the Research Division also produces quarterly reports on the status of prison overcrowding and specialized research briefs on specific offender populations.

Copies of the full reports and studies may be obtained by writing or calling.

**Massachusetts Department of Correction  
Research Division - 22nd Floor  
100 Cambridge Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02202  
(617) 727-3300**

## **II. ABSTRACTS OF RESEARCH REPORTS**

**A STATISTICAL DESCRIPTION OF  
RESIDENTS OF MASSACHUSETTS CORRECTIONAL  
INSTITUTIONS ON JANUARY 1, 1993**

#375

November 1993

Michael A. White  
Research Analyst

This report presents a statistical description of 9,851 individuals in the custody of the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) on January 1, 1993. The report contains information on present offense and sentence, personal background characteristics, and criminal history. The information is presented for the DOC population as a whole and for each facility separately. Changes in the population over the last five years are also given. Some of the highlights of the information presented in this report are:

- The 9,851 inmates in the DOC represent an increase of 9 percent over the prior year (N=9075) and an increase of 57 percent over 1988 (N=6,265)
- Between 1988 and 1993, DOC population showed an increase in the proportion of Hispanic offenders, an increase in the proportion of offenders age 30 or over; and an increase in the proportion of sex offenders from 14% in 1988 to 17% in 1993 (N=1,690).
- Nine percent were in maximum security facilities, 69 percent in medium security, 3 percent in minimum security, 14 percent in minimum/pre-release security, 3 percent in pre-release security, and 4 percent in specialized facilities: Bridgewater State Hospital, Longwood Treatment Center, MA Boot Camp and the Treatment Center for Sexually Dangerous Persons.
- Forty-seven percent of the population were incarcerated for an offense against the person, 17 percent for sex offenses, 12 percent for property offenses, 20 percent for drug offenses, and 4 percent for other offenses.
- There were 1,027 lifers in the DOC, including 426 first-degree lifers and 601 second-degree lifers.
- The median age of the population was 30 years.
- Fifty-two percent were serving their first adult incarceration and, 48 percent had a previous incarceration as an adult.

**1991 COURT COMMITMENTS TO THE  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION**

#370

**December 1992**

**Lisa Lorant  
Senior Statistical Analyst**

This report is a statistical description of the 3,737 individuals committed by the courts to a term of incarceration in the Massachusetts Department of Correction during the year 1991. The tables in this report contain information on the nature of present offense, personal background characteristics and criminal history of these individuals. Some highlights of the statistics presented in this report are:

- There was a 1 percent decrease in the number of commitments during the year, from 3,794 in 1990 to 3,737 in 1991. The 3,737 commitments in 1991 represent the first decrease in commitments over the last 10 years.
- There were 2,042 commitments to Cedar Junction (3 percent higher than 1990), 1,009 commitments to Framingham (9 percent lower than 1990), and 686 commitments to Concord (3 percent lower than 1990).
- Males are committed to Cedar Junction or Concord while females are committed to Framingham. Overall, there was an increase of 1 percent in male commitments and a decrease of 9 percent in female commitments from 1990 to 1991.
- The median minimum sentence for Cedar Junction commitments was five years; the median maximum sentence for Concord commitments was five years; and the median maximum sentence for Framingham commitments was less than 1 year. Sentence lengths for new court commitments were similar in 1990 and 1991.
- Violent offenses (person and sex) accounted for 54 percent of all male commitments and 13 percent of all female commitments. Non-violent offenses (property, drug and "other") represented 87 percent of all female commitments and 46 percent of all male commitments. From 1990 to 1991 there were increases in commitments for person and for sex offenses. There were decreases in commitments for property, drug and "other" offenses.
- The median age at commitment was 28 years.

- Fifty percent of the commitment population were white, 28 percent were African American, 21 percent were Hispanic and one percent were other races.
- Fifty-four percent of those committed were serving their first adult incarceration and 46 percent had one or more prior adult incarceration.

**POPULATION MOVEMENTS IN THE  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION,  
1991**

368

September, 1992

**Ramon V. Raagas  
EDP Programmer II**

This report summarized the movement of offenders in the custody of the DOC during 1991. While the focus of the analysis is on calendar year 1991, trends in population movement over the period 1986 to 1991 are also discussed.

Some of the highlights of the information presented in this report include:

- There were 22,206 admissions and 21,498 releases of all types to and from DOC facilities during 1991, including movements between facilities.
- The continued pattern of admissions surpassing releases led to a 68% population growth in the agency over the past five years.
- In 1991 admissions to the DOC included commitments/from and afters (N=3,746), parole/probation violators (N=1,537), and county transfers (N=380).
- In 1991 releases from the DOC included paroles to street (N=1,544), discharges to street (N=1,604), transfers to county facilities (N=1,779) and expirations of sentence to street (N=76).

**A STATISTICAL DESCRIPTION OF RELEASES FROM  
MASSACHUSETTS CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS  
DURING 1991**

#372

March 1993

**Michael White  
Research Analyst**

This report presents a statistical description of the 3,293 offenders released to the street from a Massachusetts correctional facility 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 1990 releases and an increase of 209 (7 percent) over 1987 releases. 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.
- Forty-eight percent of all releases were by parole, 52 percent were by good conduct discharge or expiration of sentence.
- Fifty percent were released from maximum or medium security facilities and 50 percent were released from lower security facilities. Many of those released 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.

**STATISTICAL TABLES DESCRIBING THE BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS AND  
RECIDIVISM RATES FOR RELEASES FROM MASSACHUSETTS  
CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS  
DURING 1990**

#373

July 1993

**Michael A. White  
Research Analyst**

This report presents information on recidivism rates of offenders released from Department of Correction facilities during 1990. Some highlights from this report includes the following:

- The recidivism rate in 1990 is 29%, a 2% increase from the rate for 1989 (27%).
- The number of releases increased from 3,361 in 1989 to 3,593 in 1990, an increase of 7%.
- The recidivism rate varies by security level of the institution from which the offender was released: 53% for maximum, 35% for medium, 33% for minimum, 21% for minimum/pre-release, 22% for state pre-release and 22% for contract pre-release.
- From 1989 to 1990 the recidivism rate for releases from maximum or medium security institutions remained at 36%, and the recidivism rate for releases from lower security facilities increased from 19% to 23%.
- The recidivism rate for males was 32% an increase from the 1989 figure of 29%; and the rate for females was 20% a decrease from the 1989 figure of 23%.
- Among males, the recidivism rate was 32% for those serving a Cedar Junction/State Prison sentence (compared to 30% for 1989), 39% for those serving a Concord/Reformatory sentence (compared to 35% for 1989), and 9% for those committed to other jurisdictions (e.g. county).
- Recidivists were returned for a variety of reasons: 23% for technical parole violations, 52% for a parole violation involving a new arrest, 23% for re-incarceration on a new offense, and less than one percent to await trial for a new offense.

- Offenders released by parole following a parole violation had a higher recidivism rate (68%) than those who were discharged (19%).
- Offenders committed for property offenses and person offenses had the highest recidivism rate (37% for both categories).
- The recidivism rate for those released with no prior adult incarcerations was lower (22%) than for those released with a history of one (32%) or more than one (41%) prior adult incarcerations.
- The recidivism rate for offenders with earned furloughs prior to release (18%) is lower than the recidivism rates for offenders with no furloughs prior to release (29%) and for offenders with only emergency escorted furloughs prior to release (39%).

**COURT COMMITMENTS TO  
MASSACHUSETTS COUNTY FACILITIES  
DURING 1991**

#374

August 1993

**Robert Tenaglia Jr.  
Research Analyst**

This report provides a statistical description of the 14,676 offenders committed by the courts to Massachusetts county facilities (jail or house of correction) during 1991. The report presents information on institution committed to, court committed from, month of commitments, offense, sentence length, sentence type, age, sex, race, marital status, education, place of birth and residence.

Some highlights of the statistics presented in this report are:

- In 1991 there were 14,676 commitments to county facilities. This represents an increase of 7 percent over the 13,721 commitments in 1990.
- In terms of general categories of offenses, 13 percent were committed for offenses against the person, 2 percent for sex offenses, 27 percent for property offenses, 14 percent for drug offenses, 17 percent for Operating Under the Influence (O.U.I.), and 27 percent for all other offenses.
- The most common types of offenses for which offenders were committed were O.U.I. (17 percent), motor vehicle violations (15 percent), and burglary (9 percent).
- The median sentence length was four months. Eleven percent were committed in lieu of payment of a fine. One percent were serving weekend sentences.
- The median age of offenders committed to county facilities was 27 years.
- Sixty-eight percent of the offenders were Caucasian 17 percent were African American, 14 percent were Hispanic, and one percent were other races.
- The median educational level was 12th grade.

- Sixty-one percent of the offenders were single, 12 percent were married and 11 percent were separated, divorced or widowed.
- Sixty-nine percent were born in Massachusetts, 17 percent were born in other states, 9 percent were born in U.S. territories and 5 percent were foreign-born.

**1992 Annual Statistical Report  
of the Furlough Program**

#376

**December 1993**

**Robert J. Tenaglia, Jr.  
Research Analyst**

The Furlough program was first implemented by the Massachusetts Department of Correction on November 6, 1972. Since the inception of the program until December 31, 1992, a total of 129,357 furloughs have been granted to 24,087 individuals. There have been 652 escapes since the inception of the program, yielding an overall success rate of 99.6 percent of all furloughs and an escape rate of 0.5 percent.

- During 1992 a total of 515 furloughs were granted to 295 individuals. This is a decrease of 46 percent from the 945 furloughs granted during 1991; and a decrease of 19 percent from the 366 individuals furloughed during 1991.
- The median number of furloughs for furloughed offenders for 1992 was one. This is the same as the 1991 median.
- During 1992, 44 percent of all furloughs were from pre-release facilities; 25 percent were from mixed minimum/pre-release facilities; 4 percent were from minimum security facilities; and 27 percent were from maximum or medium security institutions.
- 41 percent of the furloughs taken in 1992 were unescorted furloughs and 59 percent were emergency/emergency escorted furloughs.
- The median number of hours of leave per furlough during 1992 was 4.5. This number is a decrease of 9.5 hours from 1991.
- There were no escapes from furlough during 1992, resulting in an escape rate per furlough of 0.0 percent.

**Female Offenders in Massachusetts:  
Statistical Descriptions, Trends, and Population Projections.**

**November 1992**

**Research Division  
Massachusetts Department  
of Correction**

This unpublished monograph provides 1992 statistical information on females incarcerated in the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) and in the County Houses of Correction (HOC). Some highlights of the statistics presented are:

- DOC female commitments grew 80 percent from 1983 (N=634) to 1989 (N=1142) before falling slightly in 1990 (N=1104). The pattern of HOC commitments was quite different, declining sharply from 1983 (N=110) to 1985 (N=20) before increasing steadily to previous levels from 1986 to 1990 (N=119).
- In 1990, property and drug offenses were the most common governing offenses of new commitments (Property DOC(N=329), HOC (N=40). Drug Offenses DOC (N=333, HOC (N=45). Less than 10 percent of the women were committed for person and sex offenses combined. Other offenses (e.g., disturbing the peace, trespassing, motor vehicle offenses) accounted for about 30 percent of the commitments.
- In the DOC 60 percent of the new commitments were caucasian, 24 percent were African American, 15 percent were Hispanic and 1 percent were other races. In the county HOCs, 76 percent were Caucasian, 19 percent were African American, 3 percent were Hispanic and 2 percent other races.

This report also includes information on the incarcerated female population, a projection for the year 2001, the current bed space available for female offenders, the paroles and number of prior charges and court appearances for women in jails and prisons.