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Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report

Federal Offenses and Offenders

Sentencing and Time Served

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Sentencing and correctional policies and practices are of key interest to both the criminal justice community and the general public. The current concern over such policies reflects:

- A desire to deter potential offenders by increasing the certainty and severity of sentences.
- Increased interest in incapacitating high-risk offenders.
- Uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of rehabilitation.
- Growing awareness of the divergence between court imposed sentences and time actually served.
- Recent increases in prison populations at both the Federal and State levels.

The review and reform of these sentencing and correctional policies raise several basic questions about current Federal practices:

- How long are the sentences received by convicted Federal offenders?
- How long do offenders remain in prison?
- How long do offenders remain on probation and parole?
- What factors associated with the offender and the offense affect time

Policies governing sentencing, incarceration, and community supervision of convicted criminal offenders are central to our Nation's criminal justice system. Such policies reflect, for example, society's views of the severity of particular offenses, the extent to which potential victimizations can be averted through offender incapacitation and deterrence, the appropriate impact of prior criminal convictions on subsequent sentencing decisions, and the general assessment of criminal rehabilitation possibilities. Discussion of these issues is necessary to ensure that sentenc-

served in prison and success under supervision following release from prison?

This report summarizes recent sentencing patterns and time served by Federal offenders. Time served is reported by sentence, offense category, offense seriousness, and offender characteristics. The report provides an overview of the factors that affect time served in prison and identifies those offender characteristics most likely to result in post-release misconduct and revocation of parole and probation.

June 1987

ing policies are equitable and effective.

The data presented in this report describe Federal sentencing practices during recent years. The report also describes time served by Federal offenders and identifies factors relevant to success on parole and probation.

The report is based on data analyzed as part of the BJS Federal statistical program. We wish to thank the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts and the U.S. Parole Commission for providing data analyzed in the report.

Steven R. Schlesinger
Director

Major findings include:

- Of Federal offenders convicted between July 1, 1985, and June 30, 1986, 51% were sentenced to prison terms; 37% were sentenced to probation only; and the remainder received fines or other sentences. The average prison sentence for offenders receiving regular prison sentences was slightly less than 5 1/2 years.
- The length of time served was directly related to the length of sentence. For offenders who had their first parole hearing between July 1, 1979, and June

30, 1980, those who were sentenced to prison terms of 1 to 5 years served, on average, about 2 years (approximately 70% of the imposed term). Offenders sentenced to prison terms between 15 and 20 years were estimated to serve an average of 89 months, or more than 7 years (39% of the sentence terms).

- On average, among Federal offenders receiving sentences of more than 1 year, those offenders convicted of robbery and drug offenses were incarcerated for longer periods than most other types of offenders (6 years and 3 years, respectively). Time served was longer for offenders with serious prior prison records.

- Between 1979 and 1986, average lengths of regular prison sentences increased by 32%.

- Overall, of more than 24,000 Federal offenders leaving probation and parole between July 1, 1985, and June 30, 1986, more than 1 in 5 had committed a new crime or violated the technical conditions for release; 62% of those on parole and 83% of those on probation completed their full parole or probation terms.

- During the 12 months ending June 30, 1986, 38% of the offenders terminating parole supervision had parole revoked and, in most cases, were returned to prison for major new criminal violations (15%), minor new criminal violations (4%), or technical violations (19%). During the same period, 17% of the offenders terminating probation supervision were removed for major (4%), minor (2%), or technical (11%) violations.

- Revocation of parole for major new criminal violations increased from 1979 to 1986 and was more than twice as frequent in 1986 (15.4%) as in 1979 (6.8%).

- Revocation of parole and probation for a new crime or technical violation was more likely for males, blacks, less educated offenders, offenders with prior criminal records, and offenders convicted of robbery or forgery.

- Paroled offenders who had previously served either a prison or jail term were about three times as likely to have parole revoked as offenders with no prior convictions.

Federal legislation

The Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-473) directly addresses Federal sentencing practices. The act eliminates parole and

reduces the amount of "good time" that prison administrators may grant toward fulfillment of the offender's sentence. The United States Sentencing Commission was established and charged with the responsibility of drafting guidelines for sentencing convicted Federal offenders.

The Commission's draft guidelines were published early in 1987, and guidelines were submitted to Congress on April 13, 1987. The guidelines are intended to provide release dates that are more predictable and fairer than those resulting from the application of parole and good time credits. In addition, the act seeks to reinforce the deterrent effect of incarceration by increasing the certainty of time that offenders will be required to serve. More specifically, the act provides that in developing guidelines the Sentencing Commission:

- Review current sentencing practices and analyze the lengths of time actually served by Federal offenders.

- Consider, among other factors, the nature and circumstances of the offense and the history and characteristics of the defendant.

- Design sentences that protect the public and provide certain, fair, and appropriate punishment for convicted offenders.

The act also provides that, in evaluating offender characteristics, consideration be given to the offender's age, education, vocational skills, drug dependence, employment record, family and community ties, and criminal history.

Sentencing patterns

Offenders convicted in Federal District Court may be sentenced to incarceration, probation, payment of a fine, or a variant of these options.

A total of 40,740 offenders were convicted and sentenced in the 12 months prior to June 30, 1986 (table 1). More than half (51%) were sentenced to prison. About 73% of the incarcerated offenders received regular, or straight, prison terms. The remainder received split sentences (a combination of prison and probation) or sentences under the Federal Youth Corrections Act or the Youthful Offender Act.

About 37% of all convicted offenders received sentences of straight probation, that is, probation with no associated prison term. The remainder were fined or received other sentences.

Offense	Total defendants sentenced ^a	Prison			Probation	
		Defendants sentenced ^b	Defendants sentenced	Average sentence (months)	Defendants sentenced	Average sentence (months)
Total	40,740	20,621	15,002	64.6	15,230	35.5
Homicide	123	91	78	193.7	13	38.3
Robbery	1,141	1,060	863	161.3	66	55.2
Assault	411	228	163	58.3	144	27.3
Burglary	101	71	52	62.6	29	34.9
Larceny and theft	3,395	1,366	927	46.0	1,680	33.7
Embezzlement	1,766	511	229	37.8	1,222	40.4
Fraud	6,646	2,801	1,755	41.5	3,577	41.7
Auto theft	374	274	214	55.0	95	44.7
Forgery and counterfeiting	2,286	1,059	759	49.9	1,189	36.6
Sex offenses	226	135	102	91.0	81	42.2
Drug prevention and control act ^c	10,764	8,152	6,601	70.0	2,353	38.7
Miscellaneous general offenses ^d	6,837	1,600	1,080	62.0	2,022	17.0
Weapons and firearms	1,648	1,063	798	54.0	536	41.8
Immigration laws	2,443	1,431	844	20.9	913	41.4
Liquor, internal revenue	15	4	3	28.7	9	40.0
Federal statutes	2,564	767	534	55.6	1,301	30.0

^aIncludes offenders receiving prison, probation, fines, and other sentences.

^bIncludes regular prison terms, split sentences, indeterminate sentences, and sentences under the Youth Corrections Act and Youthful Offender provisions.

^cIncludes marijuana, drug, and controlled substance violations.

^dExcludes weapons and firearms.

Source: Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Annual Report, June 30, 1986, Table D-5.

The average prison sentence for offenders receiving regular prison sentences was slightly less than 5 1/2 years. Approximately 39% of these received sentences of more than 5 years; 16% were sentenced to 1 year or less. The average length of a straight probation sentence was nearly 3 years; 33% of those sentenced to straight probation were sentenced to more than 3 years of probation and 22% to 1 year or less.¹ (Throughout this report, sentence lengths refer to the maximum term specified by the judge.)

Average regular prison sentences varied across offense types. The longest sentences were imposed for homicide and robbery. The average sentence for homicide offenders serving a regular prison term was about 16 years, excluding life sentences. The average sentence for robbery was more than 13 years. The average regular prison sentence for all drug law violations (including marijuana) was 5 years and 10 months; the average prison sentence for drug law violations excluding marijuana was 6 years and 2 months.

Between 1979 and 1986 average sentence lengths for persons convicted of drug law violations and fraud increased by 38% and 43%, respectively (table 2). Average sentence length increased 41% for weapons offenses and 10% for robbery. Overall, sentence lengths increased by 32% between 1979 and 1986.

Factors affecting time served in prison

Since 1976, offenders sentenced to terms of 1 year or less have been ineligible for parole. Offenders sentenced to between 6 and 12 months, however, are eligible to have "good time" deducted from the sentence.² For sentences of less than 6 months, time served equals time sentenced.

Offenders sentenced to terms of more than 1 year prior to the effective dates of the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984 are eligible for parole. Decisions on early release are made by the Parole Commission following guidelines that indicate ranges of time to be served. The guidelines are based on criteria that rank the serious-

Table 2. Average regular prison sentences for selected Federal offenses, July 1, 1978-June 30, 1986

Offense	Average Federal prison sentences (months)							
	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
All offenses	49.0	51.9	55.3	58.6	57.2	58.0	60.2	64.6
Robbery	147.2	143.4	157.0	167.9	154.1	154.6	155.3	161.3
Drug prevention and control act*	50.8	54.5	55.5	61.4	63.8	65.7	64.8	70.0
Fraud	29.1	31.9	33.2	35.8	36.3	35.9	38.4	41.5
Weapons and firearms	38.4	48.9	42.9	40.0	43.3	43.8	43.4	54.0

Note: Regular prison sentences do not include split sentences (18 U.S.C. 3651), indeterminate sentences (18 U.S.C. 4205 B(1) and (2)), and sentences under the Youthful Offender Act (18 U.S.C. 5010 (B) (C)). Approximately one-fourth of all Federal prison sentences were in one of these categories in the 12 months preceding June 30, 1986.
*Includes marijuana, drug, and controlled substance violations.
Source: Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Annual Report, 1979-86, Table D-5.

ness of the criminal event and the risk posed by the offender as measured by the "salient factor score."

The "salient factor score" predicts an offender's "parole prognosis" on the basis of prior convictions, previous commitments, age (current and at time of conviction and commitment), time elapsed since last commitment, probation/parole/confinement/escape status, and drug dependence. Offenders with high scores are considered better parole risks.

Unless otherwise provided by statute or judicial order, offenders serving regular prison terms are eligible for parole after a third of their term, or, in the case of a life sentence or sentence over 30 years, after serving 10 years. The actual date of release and percent of sentence served may reflect both the amount of good time earned and the decision of the Parole Commission.

¹The percentages of offenders sentenced for more than 1 year and 1 year or less was derived from the Annual Report, Administrative Office of U.S. Courts, 1986, Table D-5.

²Prior to enactment of the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984, good time was earned as follows: sentence of 6 months to 1 year, 5 days a month; 1-3 years, 6 days a month; 3-5 years, 7 days a month; 5-10 years, 8 days a month; and more than 10 years, 10 days a month. Additional good time is available for employment and exceptionally meritorious duty.

Length of sentence

Among a cohort of offenders sentenced to more than 1 year, who had their initial parole hearing between July 1, 1979, and June 30, 1980, the length of time served was directly related to the length of the original sentence. Offenders receiving longer sentences generally remained in prison for longer periods, although they typically served a smaller percent of the original sentence than offenders receiving shorter terms (table 3). Offenders convicted of more serious crimes and offenders who have more serious records tended to serve longer terms than other offenders.

In general, under the parole and "good time" policies in effect between 1980 and 1986, the longer the sentence imposed on an offender, the longer the time served by that offender in prison. On the average, offenders in this cohort who were sentenced to between 1 and 5 years for all types of offenses typically served about 2 years. Offenders sentenced to between 15 and 20 years were estimated to serve an average of 89 months (7 years and 5 months).

The percent of time served by an offender, however, dropped rapidly as the length of the sentence increased. On average, for example, offenders in this same cohort sentenced to between 1 and 5 years served 70% of their sentences, whereas offenders sentenced to terms between 15 to 20 years were estimated to have served approximately 39% of their sentences.

Table 3. Average time served by adults convicted of Federal offenses with first parole hearing between July 1, 1979, and June 30, 1980, by offense and sentence length

	Time served	Percent of sentence served	Number of offenders sentenced
All offenses			
All sentences	43.3 months	59.1%	8,681
12-60 months	23.5	69.5	4,875
61-120	49.7	50.5	1,851
121-180	71.7	43.7	1,003
181-240	89.1*	39.4*	557
241+	119.5*	36.7*	395
Robbery			
All sentences	72.9	49.0%	1,535
12-60 months	35.0	76.1	147
61-120	57.2	55.0	462
121-180	76.4	46.6	424
181-240	87.4*	38.6*	322
241+	109.7*	35.6*	180
Drugs^a			
All sentences	38.5	58.6%	2,700
12-60 months	25.1	70.3	1,520
61-120	44.2	45.8	715
121-180	66.1	40.4	339
181-240	88.4	39.4	84
241+	99.4*	33.5*	42
Monetary crimes^b			
All sentences	26.5	63.8%	2,364
12-60 months	21.4	67.4	1,962
61-120	45.7	48.7	309
121-180	62.0	38.6	66
181-240	—	—	16
241+	—	—	11
Weapons			
All sentences	31.5	69.4%	391
12-60 months	25.9	74.8	309
61-120	48.1	53.1	64
121+	—	—	18
Other^c			
All sentences	50.2	60.4%	1,691
12-60 months	22.8	70.1	937
61-120	55.8	55.8	301
121-180	76.0*	46.0*	163
181-240	94.4*	41.7*	129
241+	138.0*	39.5*	161

Note: Table includes all adult offenders who had their initial hearing between July 1, 1979, and June 30, 1980, and who were released prior to January 1, 1987, or had a release date scheduled by the Parole Commission for a later date. Offenders sentenced to 1 year or less, and therefore not eligible for parole, are excluded.

*More than 10% of the release dates are estimated based on scheduled release dates. —20 or fewer offenders.

^aIncludes marijuana, drug, and controlled substance offenses.

^bIncludes counterfeiting, forgery, fraud, mail theft, embezzlement, interstate transportation of stolen securities, and receiving stolen property with intent to sell. Excludes burglary and theft.

^cAll other offenses such as immigration offenses, motor vehicle theft, regulatory offenses, rape, and kidnaping.

Source: BJS analysis of Federal Parole Commission data.

Offense

Among this cohort of offenders who received sentences of more than 1 year and who had their first parole hearing between July 1, 1979, and June 30, 1980, time served in prison also varied with the offense for which the offender was convicted. On the average, persons convicted of more serious Federal crimes, such as robbery and drug offenses, remained incarcerated for the longest time (6 years and 3 years, respectively). Offenders convicted of monetary crimes served the shortest time.

Within offense categories the severity of the criminal act also affected total time served (table 4). Offenders in the cohort who were convicted of more violent or serious forms of particular offenses served longer prison terms. Time served by offenders convicted of "moderate" drug violations (such as possession with intent to sell) typically ranged from less than 2 years for lowest-risk offenders to nearly 3 1/2 years for highest-risk offenders. Time served by offenders convicted of more serious drug offenses (such as large-scale sales and distribution) typically ranged from more than 4 years to slightly more than 6 1/2 years. The longest average time served was estimated for the highest level of offense seriousness (including robberies involving serious injury), with estimates ranging from more than 6 1/2 years to nearly 10 years.

Because the study did not include those offenders sentenced to short terms of 1 year or less, the average number of months served by all offenders in each crime category may be less than than the number of months shown in tables 3 and 4.

Offender characteristics

For purposes of releasing Federal prisoners to parole, offender characteristics are classified by the Parole Commission according to the "salient factor score," which is designed to predict the likelihood that an offender will succeed (or fail) on parole.

In general, the length of time served by an offender corresponded to the seriousness of his salient factor score. For example, among the offenders sentenced to more than 1 year with initial parole hearings between July 1, 1979, and June 30, 1980, those with higher risk salient factor scores (indicating, for example, more serious prior criminal records or drug dependence) remained in prison for longer periods of time.

Table 4. Time served by Federal offenders convicted of Federal offenses, by offense seriousness and Parole Commission risk ranking (salient factor score)

Offense seriousness ^a	Parole Commission risk categories by salient factor score ^b				
	All offenders	Lowest risk	Low risk	High risk	Highest risk
All offenses	43.3 months	31.0 months	40.6 months	49.9 months	59.2 months
Low	20.7	—	—	—	—
Low to moderate	23.4	16.4	20.7	21.5	27.8
Monetary ^c —less than \$2,000		14.2	18.8	21.8	28.0
Moderate	24.5	15.8	21.0	29.0	35.7
Drugs—possession/intent to sell		20.8	25.7	42.9	41.7
Monetary—\$2,000 to \$20,000		14.6	19.7	27.6	35.3
Weapon—possession/sale/single weapon		—	—	26.1	33.3
High	29.8	20.5	30.4	39.2	43.1
Drugs—5-g. opiate, 100-g. cocaine		22.2	35.1	44.8	48.4
Monetary—\$20,000 to \$100,000		17.4	25.4	37.5	46.9
Weapon—possession/sale/multiple weapons or machine guns		23.7	22.6	35.1	33.7
Very high	49.9	30.9	48.9	62.9	74.4
Robbery—1 or 2 instances		48.1	58.4	71.3	78.9
Drugs—5+g. opiate, 100+g. cocaine		28.9	43.7	47.6	60.8
Monetary—\$100,000 to \$500,000		23.0	41.2	51.4	51.0
Greatest (I)	61.8	46.3	63.0	77.8*	88.5*
Robbery—3 or 4 instances		55.9	84.6*	85.8	95.8*
Drugs—large scale or proprietary		52.5	60.8	71.4*	79.3
Monetary—excess of \$500,000		32.4	—	—	—
Greatest (II)	100.7*	79.2*	94.6*	108.0*	118.0*
Robbery—serious injury		—	—	89.0*	106.1*

Note: See table 3.

*More than 10% of the release dates are estimated.

^a—20 or fewer offenders.

^bOffenses are classified according to Parole Commission categories in effect at time of initial parole hearing. 1983 revisions to the offense seriousness scale upgrade the seriousness of some offenses such as those involving cocaine and heroin.

^bSalient factor score rating 9-11 equals lowest risk; 6-8 is low risk; 4-5 is high risk; 0-3 is highest risk.

^cIncludes forgery, fraud, mail theft, embezzlement, and interstate transport of stolen property with intent to sell; excludes burglary and theft.

^dIncludes marijuana, drugs, and controlled substance offenses.

Source: BJS analysis of Federal Parole Commission data.

Offenders with "highest risk" salient factor scores served an average of nearly 5 years (59 months) in prison. This contrasts with offenders with "lowest-risk" salient factor scores, who served an average of 31 months in prison.

Offenders with higher-risk salient factor scores also served longer periods in prison at each level of offense seriousness. Offenders classified as having equal risk levels, however, served longer periods of time in prison when convicted of more serious offenses.

Time served after parole revocation

Because some offenders violate the conditions of their parole and are returned to prison, the total time served for a particular offense may include time served before parole as well as additional time served after parole revocation. The amount of additional time served following revocation varied with the offender's prior record, the cause of revocation, and the initial offense (table 5).

As might be expected, offenders initially convicted of the most serious offenses were estimated to serve substantially more additional time after parole revocation (30 months on average) than those offenders initially convicted of the least serious offenses (who served an average additional 16 months). Similarly, offenders with the highest-risk salient factor scores, probably reflecting serious prior criminal records, served longer periods of additional time (31 months on average) than offenders with lowest-risk salient factor scores (20 months). This may reflect the fact that high-risk offenders were more likely to have committed serious offenses while on parole or that such offenders had initially received longer sentences and had longer periods remaining to serve after parole revocation.

Probation and parole

The Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984 eliminates parole for offenders sentenced after the effective date of the act. However, it provides that probation and supervised release after imprisonment shall be considered as sentencing options when appropriate. Data on current parole and probation practices and on the success rates for different categories of offenders released under such supervision is relevant to these considerations.

In the 12 months preceding June 30, 1986, 24,568 Federal offenders left parole and probation supervision as a result of completion of the required period of supervision or revocation for a new violation. Nearly 22% (5,396) had supervision revoked for either a new criminal violation or a technical violation of the conditions of parole or probation (table 6).

Table 5. Average time served by Federal offenders following parole revocation, by seriousness of original offense and Parole Commission risk ranking (salient factor score)

Offense seriousness ^a	Parole Commission risk categories by salient factor score ^b				
	All risk levels	Lowest risk	Low risk	High risk	Highest risk
All levels ^c	27.0 months	19.5 months	22.2 months	27.0 months	31.1 months
Low	16.0	—	—	—	—
Low to moderate	17.4	17.2	15.4	16.6	19.6
Moderate	19.7	16.2	18.4	21.7	19.7
High	22.9	15.6	18.9	26.5	26.7
Very high	27.3	19.9	25.1	27.2	34.4*
Greatest (I)	28.5	26.9*	27.1	29.6	30.7
Greatest (II)	30.4	—	—	—	—

Note: Calculations were based on all adult, juvenile, and youthful offenders whose first parole hearing following a revocation occurred between July 1, 1981, and June 30, 1983. Time served was based on the release date for offenders released prior to January 1, 1987, and the projected release date (set by the Parole Commission) for offenders scheduled for release after January 1, 1987. — 20 or fewer offenders.

*More than 10% of released dates are estimated.

^aCategories correspond to Parole Commission categories in effect at time of parole hearing after revocation.

^bSee note b, table 4.

^cSee table 4 for examples of offenses within each category.

Source: BJS analysis of Federal Parole Commission data.

Table 6. Federal offenders leaving parole and probation supervision, by basis for termination of supervision, July 1, 1985-June 30, 1986

	Total	No violation ^a	Violation		
			Major ^b	Minor ^c	Technical ^d
Parole	5,535	3,449	855	192	1,039
Probation ^e	19,033	15,723	771	351	2,188
Total	24,568	19,172	1,626	543	3,227

^aIncludes expiration of term, early release, and other.

^bInvolved in or convicted of new major offense or sentenced to over 90 days imprisonment or 1 year probation.

^cConvicted of minor offense with sentence of less than 90 days imprisonment or 1 year probation.

^dViolation of supervision conditions other than new conviction (may include drug or alcohol abuse).

^eImposed by judge or magistrate.

Source: Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Annual Report, 1985, Table E-7.

New criminal violations include major and minor violations. Major violations are defined as convictions for a new major offense or a sentence to either more than 90 days imprisonment or 1 year probation. Minor violations are convictions for a minor offense with a sentence of less than 90 days imprisonment or 1 year probation. Technical violations are violations of the conditions of parole or probation without conviction for a new offense but with possible violations for drug or alcohol abuse.

Of the 5,535 persons leaving parole supervision, 62% completed the full term of parole; 38% were removed from supervision, and in most cases returned to custody, for major parole violations (15%), minor violations (4%), or technical violations (19%).

Of 19,033 offenders whose probation ended, 83% completed the full term of supervision. The remaining 17% were removed from supervision for major (4%), minor (2%), or technical (11%) violations.

Successful completion of probation remained relatively constant between 1979 and 1986 (table 7). Revocation of parole for major violations increased, however, and was more than twice as frequent in 1986 (15.4%) as in 1979 (6.8%), peaking at 15.9% in 1984.

Factors determining success on parole and probation

A variety of factors are related to the likelihood that an offender will have parole or probation supervision revoked for either a new crime or a technical violation (table 8).

Overall, during the 12-month period ending June 30, 1983, offenders released on parole had supervision revoked for technical violations (8.0%) and new crimes (6.6%) more often than offenders released on probation, whose probation revocation rates for technical and new crime offenses were 4.1% and 2.6%.

This difference may suggest that offenders sentenced to probation are generally better risks than those sentenced to prison and subsequently released on parole.

Among the same cohort of offenders released on either probation or parole, revocation for a technical violation or a new crime was generally more likely for males (7.3% probation, 14.6% parole) than females (5.0% probation, 13.5% parole) and for blacks (10.9% probation, 19.3% parole) than others (5.4% probation, 12.1% parole). Offenders with the lowest levels of education and persons convicted of robbery and forgery were also more likely to have parole or probation revoked than were offenders who had higher levels of education or were convicted of drug offenses, fraud, or embezzlement.

Offenders with prior prison records were also more likely to violate probation and parole conditions than were offenders without records. Of individuals on probation, 16.9% of the offenders with prior prison records had supervision revoked for new crimes (7.2%) or technical violations (9.7%). A total of 3.5% of offenders with no prior convictions had probation revoked. Similarly, paroled offenders with prior

Table 8. Percent of Federal offenders on probation or parole between July 1, 1982, and June 30, 1983, whose supervision was revoked, by offender characteristics

Offender characteristics	Probation			Parole ^a		
	Total persons on probation	Supervision revoked for		Total persons on parole	Supervision revoked for	
		New crime ^b	Technical violation ^c		New crime ^b	Technical violation ^c
Total	26,826	2.6%	4.1%	11,845	6.6%	8.0%
Sex						
Male	20,860	2.9	4.4	11,060	6.7	7.9
Female	5,912	1.7	3.3	783	4.6	8.9
Race						
Black	6,233	3.9	7.0	4,049	9.4	9.9
White/other ^d	20,415	2.2	3.2	7,708	5.1	7.0
Marital status						
Married ^e	13,936	1.9	2.9	4,668	4.6	6.5
Not married	12,594	3.5	5.5	7,062	7.9	8.9
Education completed						
Less than high school	11,554	3.5	5.4	6,543	7.4	8.8
High school ^f	7,929	2.3	3.7	3,199	6.6	8.4
Some college	6,727	1.5	2.4	1,857	3.9	4.6
Criminal records^g						
No convictions	12,699	1.4	2.1	2,368	3.1	3.2
Probation	6,962	3.2	4.6	2,945	5.7	7.0
Jail term	2,345	4.7	9.1	1,554	7.7	9.9
Prison term	2,125	7.2	9.7	4,221	9.1	10.9
Offense						
Robbery	382	5.2	7.3	2,784	9.7	9.2
Forgery	1,429	6.4	6.4	457	12.7	13.1
Embezzlement	2,849	.8	1.9	128	6.3	8.6
Drugs	4,023	1.7	3.9	5,365	3.7	6.9
Weapons	1,328	3.9	4.4	305	6.6	8.2
Fraud	6,196	1.3	2.4	402	4.7	5.5
Other	10,619	3.5	5.3	2,404	8.6	8.4

Note: Data encompass all offenders who were initially received for supervision (probation or parole) prior to July 1, 1982, and whose expiration dates were after June 30, 1983. Thus, offenders were potentially at risk for the same 12-month period. The data exclude military cases and offenders serving probation or parole from other than a U.S. District Court or magistrate. Records lacking information on offender characteristics are included in the total.
^aIncludes special parole.
^bIncludes "major" and "minor" violations.

^cViolation of supervision conditions other than conviction of a new offense (may include drug or alcohol abuse).
^dAll offenders classified as other than black.
^eIncludes common law marriage.
^fIncludes vocational and technical degree.
^gCategories are mutually exclusive and exhaustive, classified by the most severe prior sentence.
 Source: BJS analysis of probation master file provided by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.

prison records were three times as likely to have supervision revoked (20.0%) as were persons with no prior convictions (6.3%).

Table 7. Basis for Federal offenders leaving parole and probation supervision, 1979-1986

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Parole^a								
No violation ^b	74.9%	69.0%	67.9%	70.0%	68.9%	63.0%	61.9%	62.3%
Major violation ^c	6.8	9.0	10.5	11.8	12.4	15.9	14.5	15.4
Probation								
No violation	84.7%	84.3%	83.8%	83.4%	83.4%	84.4%	83.2%	82.6%
Major violation	3.2	3.6	3.6	3.9	4.4	3.9	4.4	4.1

Note: Data are for the 12 months ending June 30 of each year.

^aExcludes military and special parole.

^bIncludes expiration of term, early release, and other.

^cInvolved in or convicted of new major

offense or sentenced to more than 90 days imprisonment or 1 year probation.

Source: Administrative Office of the U.S.

Courts, Annual Report, 1979-1986, Table E-7.

Methodology

Calculations for tables 1, 2, 6, and 7 were drawn directly from the published sources cited in the tables' notes.

Tables 3, 4, and 5 were calculated by Abt Associates Inc. from the U.S. Parole Commission's parole decision hearing (PDH) file. The PDH file is continuously updated, and a copy was provided in January 1987 for these calculations.

In these three tables, time served is based on the actual date of release from custody for offenders released prior to January 1, 1987. For those offenders not released by that date, time served is an estimate based on the assumption that the offender will be released at the projected release date scheduled at the most recent parole hearing.

An earlier version of the PDH file (July 1984) was used to validate the accuracy of the procedure for estimating time served; estimates of time served, derived by using the 1984 copy of the file, were compared with actual times served as recorded in the 1987 copy of the file. In table 5, for example, 746 of the offenders whose times served were known in January 1987 were shown in the 1984 file with release dates set but not yet achieved; only 28 of these offenders' actual release dates differed from the date shown in the 1984 file, and the average actual time served for these 28 offenders was nearly identical to their average estimated time served.

Overall, 3.6% of offenders in tables 3 and 4 and 7.5% in table 5 had their time served estimated from release dates set but not yet achieved by January 1, 1987. The statistics in these tables are averages (means) of the length of time actually spent or to be spent in custody. The averages are not directly comparable with medians (50th percentiles), which may be published in other sources. Since the study does not include offenders sentenced to 1 year or less, the actual average number of months served by all offenders in each crime category may be lower than the number of months shown in tables 3 and 4.

Because tables 4 and 5 represent two separate groups of individuals, the data presented in this report do not necessarily permit calculation of the full time served by any single group of offenders. Development of a single table tracing the full correctional history for a specific cohort of offenders was not attempted because it would require

data for more calendar years than were readily available and would be based on less current data.

Each record in the PDH file describes the outcome of a single parole hearing, together with any regional or national appeals of the results of the hearing. Thus, a prison inmate may have multiple records of parole hearings in this file. Ordinarily, the length of time the inmate has already been in custody increases from one record to the next in accordance with the dates of the records. For example, a hearing record for February 1984 ordinarily would show 13 more months of custody than a record from January 1983 for the same inmate. However, if in the interim the inmate had been released and returned to custody on a parole violation, the length of custody shown on the February 1984 record would refer to the number of months since the latest date received. Further, the type of offense shown on the February 1984 record might differ from the offense type on earlier records. Accordingly, the PDH file permits analysis of offenders who have violated parole even though the records do not provide any specific information about the parole violation. In table 5, the seriousness of the offense shown on the inmate's first parole hearing record (before the violation) is used to define the categories in the table.

The offense seriousness shown in tables 4 and 5 is coded by the Parole Commission. The particular types of offenses listed in table 4 do not define the offense seriousness categories; rather, they are typical examples of offenses that would ordinarily have the seriousness level indicated.

Inmates with sentences shorter than 1 year are excluded from the statistics in tables 3, 4, and 5 because they do not have any records in the PDH file.

Table 8 was calculated by Abt Associates Inc. from the probation and parole master file, maintained by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. It shows statistics for those who were at risk of violating supervision for the entire 12-month period from July 1, 1982, to June 30, 1983. Thus the figures should be comparable with statistics from other sources that are based on 1-year risk periods. Individuals on supervision for part of the indicated 12-month period (for example, those whose supervision started during the period or whose supervision terminated normally during the period) are not included in the statistics in table 8. Because the reported rates in

table 8 are for a 12-month period, the rates are lower than the overall failure rate among these offenders during the full supervision period.

This Bureau of Justice Statistics special report was prepared by Abt Associates Inc. under the program direction of Carol Kaplan, chief, Federal statistics and information policy branch. The report was edited by Frank D. Balog. Marilyn Marbrook, publications unit chief, administered report production, assisted by Jeanne Harris, Arlene F. James, and June Maynard.

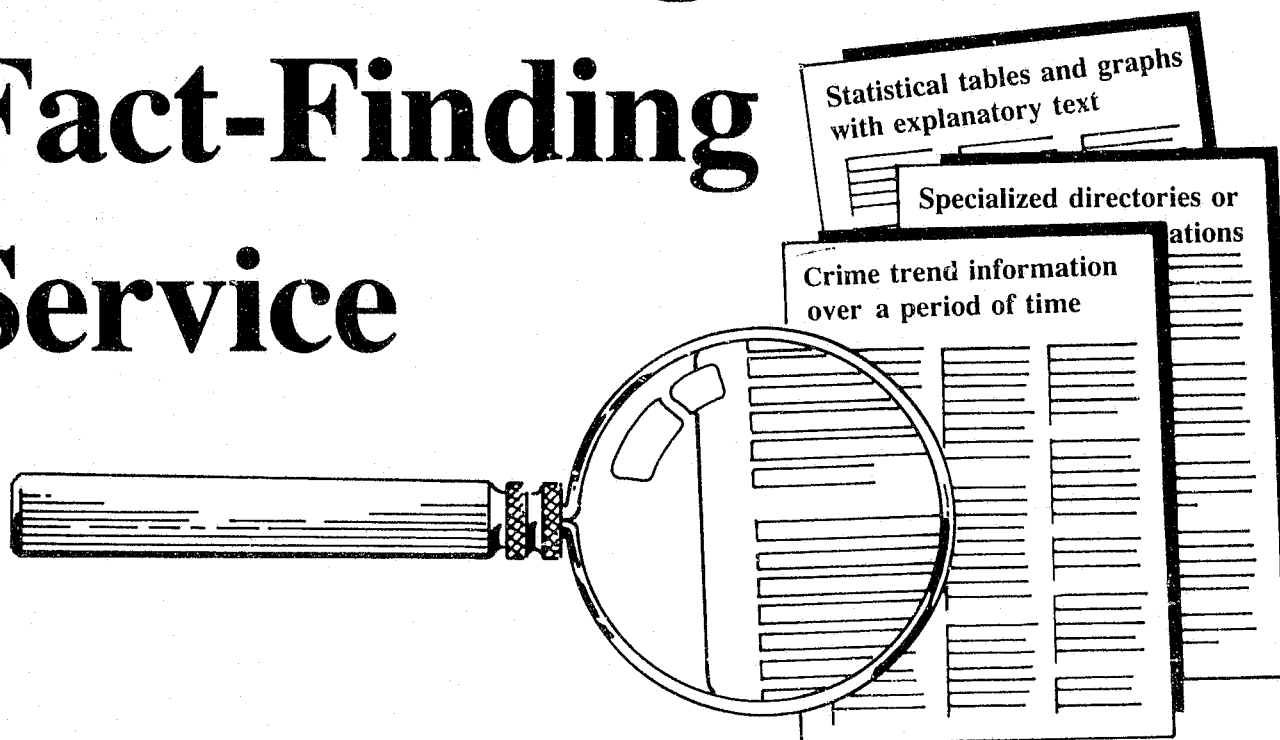
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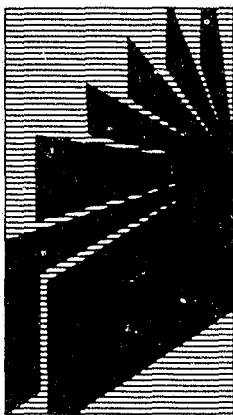
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