



FACT SHEET 98-06

SEX OFFENDER RECIDIVISM

During September 1998, the Research Unit of the Arizona Department of Corrections. (ADC) completed an analysis of sex offenders released from ADC custody over the ten-year period from July 1988 through June 1998. A released offender was included in the study if he or she was serving time for one or more sex offenses just prior to release from incarceration. Offenders were tracked only with reference to the first release from a given criminal sentence.

The record of each targeted sex offender was reviewed to determine if the offender returned to the custody of the Department by June 30, 1998, and if so, under what circumstances. Returns for technical violations were distinguished from returns with new felony convictions. In cases of new convictions, information was recorded concerning the nature of all new conviction offenses. Preliminary findings from the study are as follows:

- 2,444 sex offenders were released from ADC custody over the ten-year period. The average period of follow-up (to June 30, 1998) for all sex offenders was 54.5 months. Among the 2,444, 509 or 20.8 % returned at least once to the custody of the Department, including 346 or 14.2% with new felony convictions. While sex offenders returned to prison for a variety of new crimes, 78 or **3.2% returned for a new felony sex offense**, and an additional 90 or 3.7% returned for a new violent felony offense.
- Among the 2,444 released sex offenders, 1,087 (44.5%) were released to the supervision of ADC parole officers. Among this group, eight (8) or 0.7% were found to have committed a new sex offense during the period of parole supervision. Among the eight (8), one (1) or 0.1% returned to custody with a new sex offense conviction while still under supervision. The remaining seven (7) were returned to custody after termination of the period of supervision.
- The most serious new sex offense committed by the 78 sex offense recidivists was:
 - Child molestation or sexual conduct with a minor 34(44%)
 - Rape or sexual assault 22(28%)
 - Sexual indecency (exposing) 14(18%)
 - Sexual abuse 8(10%)
- Among the 78 sex offense recidivists, the timing of the commission of new sex offenses was as follows:
 - 35 (45%) were committed within the first year after release;
 - 19 (24%) were committed within the second year after release;
 - 8 (10%) were committed within the third year after release;
 - 3 (4%) were committed within the fourth year after release;
 - 6 (8%) were committed within the fifth year after release;
 - 4 (5%) were committed within the sixth year after release;
 - 3 (4%) were committed within the seventh year after release.

The Department of Corrections is currently working with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to determine if data can be accessed for the completion of the second phase of the research. Further study will be undertaken if data is available to ascertain if any of the offenders in the study have re-offended and have entered secure custody in other jurisdictions. It is anticipated that the report on the first phase of the research will be published before the end of the year. For further information, please contact the Department of Corrections.

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