

# Studying Recidivism

## Introduction

The VADOC studies recidivism to gather information on the success of inmates 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 have been captured in the 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, including those for crimes committed prior to release and technical violations.

## State Responsible Releases

This report provides information on the recidivism of SR releases. SR releases include all Virginia felons who were sentenced to an incarceration period of one year or more and were released from an 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
FY2013	11,661	11,575
FY2014	12,109	12,021
FY2015	12,490	12,385
FY2016	12,647	12,551
FY2017	12,539	12,429
FY2018	12,602	12,501
FY2019	12,696	12,601

Releases from Community Corrections Alternative Programs (CCAPs) 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\*

Release cohorts after FY2015 have shown an increase in re-arrest rates for all time periods except for the 6-month follow-up period. 36-month re-arrest rates hit their highest point in the FY2014 release cohort at 56.3%, but decreased by 2.9 percentage points to 53.4% in the FY2015 cohort. The highest rate of re-arrest at the 24-month follow-up period occurred with the FY2016 release cohort with a rate of 45.2%.

Months since Release	Re-Arrest				
	6	12	18	24	36
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	54.2
FY2017	13.6	27.5	37.6	45.1	
FY2018	13.3	27.8	38.6		

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 July 2020 Virginia State Police (VSP) criminal history data. A new process was established with this study using confirmed State Identification Numbers (SIDs) rather than inmates name. The change in matching process may explain minor changes in reporting results.

### Re-Conviction\*

Re-conviction rates reached their lowest point with the FY2018 release cohort for the 6 and 12 month follow-up period. The FY2016 release cohort 12 to 24-month re-conviction rates increased from the FY2015 release cohort rates but did not exceed those of the FY2013 or FY2014 release cohort rates. The 12-month reconviction rate fell 0.2 percentage points between FY2016 and FY2017 release cohorts and between FY2017 and FY2018 release cohorts.

Months since Release	Re-Conviction				
	6	12	18	24	36
FY2013	11.3	23.6	32.7	39.4	48.6
FY2014	11.5	24.2	33.3	40.0	48.2
FY2015	10.3	21.7	30.5	37.1	46.0
FY2016	9.9	21.8	31.1	37.7	
FY2017	10.0	21.6	30.2		
FY2018	9.7	21.4			

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 considers convictions for offenses that occurred after an inmate's release date.

### Re-Incarceration†

Re-incarceration rates have fluctuated among the past several release year cohorts. Between the FY2013 and FY2014 release cohorts, the 3-year re-incarceration rate increased by 1.0 percentage point to 23.4%, but then decreased by 0.3 percentage points to 23.1% in the FY2015 release cohort. By the FY2016 release cohort, the 3-year re-incarceration rate increased again, by 0.8 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
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	15.6	23.9
FY2017	1.3	4.9	9.8		
FY2018	1.2	4.6			

VADOC waits at least four years to calculate the three year re-incarceration rate of SR releases in order to allow all court information to be received and entered into VirginiaCORIS (VADOC's offender management system). Without waiting for the data to fully mature, the FY2016 recidivism rate in July 2019 would have been 22.9%. 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 FY2013-2014 release cohorts have been kept constant with the rates reported in the previous year.