Recidivism Rates of SCDC FY 2017 Releases

The South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) measures recidivism as a return to prison, either for a new conviction or a technical violation of the terms of supervision in the community. Community supervision revocations that do not result in an admission to SCDC are not counted as a recidivist. The jurisdiction of SCDC consists of offenders who have been sentenced to more than 3 months.

An SCDC releasee is considered a "recidivist" when they re-enter SCDC custody within 36 months of release, but excludes those offenders convicted and returned to prison for a past offense only (an offense that occurred prior to their release). An offender is a releasee when he/she is conditionally released via placement on supervision in the community (probation / parole / community supervision / supervised reentry / intensive supervision) or unconditionally released at the completion of his/her sentence (maxout). Offenders who died, left SCDC for appeals, or whose sentences were remanded are not included in recidivism analysis. Release cohorts are distinguished by the Fiscal Year (FY) during which their release occurred (a fiscal year being July 1st through June 30th). Offenders with multiple releases during the fiscal year are counted once, with the first release during the year being tracked for recidivism.

Overall Recidivism Rate

In FY 2017, there were 9,123 releasees (1,122 females and 8,001 males). Of those releasees, 1,843 (152 females and 1,691 males) recidivated to SCDC within 36 months due to conviction for a crime committed after release and/or supervision revocation for an overall rate of 20.2% (13.6% and 21.1%, respectively).

SCDC’s recidivism rate has seen a slight yet steady decline in recent years.
In 2016, SCDC modified its recidivism calculation to its current definition from what is now referred to as the total return to prison rate, which includes all releasees that return to SCDC within 36 months, including those who return solely for offenses committed prior to their release.

According to a recent study published by the Virginia Department of Corrections, South Carolina has the lowest re-incarceration rate among the 42 states for which three-year re-incarceration rates are publicly available.

[Three-Year Return to Prison Rate graph]

[Three-Year Re-Incarceration Rates: A State Comparison graph]

Source: Virginia Department of Corrections Research-Evaluation Unit
**Recidivism Rates by Offender Groups**

Releasees can be grouped by a common factor to analyze recidivism.

Offenders between age 17 and 21 at time of release are most likely to recidivate; of that group, YOAs recidivated at 36.8% and straight-timers at 26.9%. This age group was significantly higher than other age groups, followed by offenders ages 22 to 25 at a rate of 24.1%.

![Three-Year Recidivism Rates by Age at Release](image)

Recidivism rates vary considerably by release type. Offenders convicted of “no parole” offenses and released to community supervision after serving at least 85% of their sentences recidivated at the lowest rate of 10.2%. YOA parolees had the greatest chance of recidivating (36.1%) followed by those released to YOA Intensive Supervision (28.5%). Non-YOA releases with the highest rate of recidivism were those released on probation (27.0%).

![Three-Year Recidivism Rates by Type of Release](image)

*Youthful Offender Act (YOA) inmates serve an indeterminate sentence of 1 to 6 years. Intensive Supervision releases began in FY13; this parole program includes "first time" youthful offenders who undergo intensive programs/oversight while institutionalized and while on parole supervision.*
While the recidivism rate for inmates sentenced under the Youthful Offender Act (YOA) continues to decline, it remains consistently and significantly higher than straight-timers’ rate.

In general, recidivism decreases with longer time served. However, offenders who served 9.1 months to 1 year recidivated at a higher rate (24.4%) than those who served 9 months or less (20.5%).
Programming is an integral part of preparing offenders for re-entry to the community. Offenders who participated in Pre-Release, Work Program, Labor Crew, Prison Industry or GED programming recidivated at a lower rate than SCDC’s overall rate of 20.2%. Prison Industry has stood out, year over year, as being vastly lower than other programs.

In recent years recidivism for offenders who earned a GED while incarcerated in SCDC has declined, and is now second lowest in this category, behind Prison Industry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Participation</th>
<th>Three-Year Recidivism Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Release</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Program</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Crew</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Crew/Work Program</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison Industry</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED Earned in PUSD*</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Palmetto Unified School District (PUSD) is SCDC's school district.

Offenders with prior convictions and/or commitments to SCDC (22.9%) recidivate at a much higher rate than offenders with no known priors (16.1%).
The five counties with the highest recidivism rates are all between 30% and 32%.

The six counties with the highest number of releases have recidivism rates between 14.5% and 22%.

For many years releasees classified as mentally ill at time of release recidivated at a moderately higher rate than those classified as non-mentally ill. However, FY 2017 releasees classified as mentally ill recidivated at a markedly lower rate (20.6%) than those in FY 2016 (24.7%), which is in line with their non-mentally ill counterparts (20.1%).
### Three-Year Recidivism Rates by Most Serious Offense (MSO) Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MSO Category</th>
<th>Releases</th>
<th>Recidivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous Drugs</td>
<td>1,976</td>
<td>16.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>1,389</td>
<td>24.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>27.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>19.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>16.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Offense</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>18.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Offense</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>14.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Offense</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>20.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraudulent Activity</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>16.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen Vehicle</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>32.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Offenses</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstructing Police</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>19.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>17.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgery/Counterfeiting</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>21.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>2.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen Property</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accessory to Felony</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>12.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damaged Property</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight/Escape</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Conspiracy</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invasion</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29.17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smuggling</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Peace</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crime Against Person</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Possession of Tools</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obscene Material</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obstructing Justice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercialized Sex</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extortion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitual Offender</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Crimes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embezzlement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>License Violation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misprison to Felony</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Revenue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>