



Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report

ACQUISITIONS

Prison Rule Violators

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A nationally representative survey of State prison inmates in 1986 found that over half (53%) had been charged with violating prison rules at least once since entering prison on their current sentence. The survey estimated that the 450,000 prison inmates were charged with a total of 1.75 million rule violations.

The percentage of prisoners charged with infractions during their current term had not changed appreciably from the 54% in 1979, when the last survey was completed, even though the national prison population had increased by 64% over this period.

Among the findings from the study of the inmates' infractions were the following:

- Younger inmates and those with more extensive criminal careers or drug histories were the most likely to have violated prison rules.
- Inmates housed in larger prisons or maximum-security prisons had higher percentages of rule violations than prisoners in other types of facilities.
- More than 90% of the inmates charged with violating prison rules were found guilty in prison administrative proceedings.
- The 90%-and-above rate of guilty decisions occurred for different racial/ethnic, age, and sex categories and did not vary by size or security level of the prison.
- Inmates serving their first sentence to prison had a lower average annual rate of infraction (1.0) than did recidivists (1.6),

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This special report analyzes the characteristics of State prison inmates charged with violating facility rules during their current incarceration. Based on a variety of demographic, drug-use, criminal-history, and facility-related measures, this study expands our understanding of the inmates most likely to violate prison rules and describes the number and frequency of their violations during their current incarceration.

We thank the hundreds of prison administrators and staff who facilitated the interviewing of inmates; without their cooperation this study would not have been possible. We hope these and other criminal justice practitioners, policymakers, and researchers will find this report useful.

Joseph M. Bessette
Acting Director

regardless of how long they had served on their current sentence.

- A higher percentage of male inmates (53%) than female inmates (47%) were charged with rule breaking. On an average annual basis, however, women had a higher prison infraction rate than men (2.0 average violations per year versus 1.4 for men).
- Inmates who used drugs prior to admission were more likely to violate prison rules than were nonusers of drugs, 57% compared to 37%.

Table 1. State prison inmates charged with violating prison rules during their current sentence, 1979 and 1986

Year	All inmates	State prison inmates who were charged	
		Number	Percent
1979	274,564	147,659	53.8%
1986	450,416	237,147	52.7

Note: See the definition and classification of rule violators in the box on page 2.

- Whites and blacks committed infractions at the same rate — approximately 1.5 violations per inmate per year.

- White and black rule violators reported nearly identical distributions of punishments received for rule violations. The most common penalties were solitary confinement or segregation and loss of goodtime credit.

Rule violations in State prisons

Prison rules regulate inmate conduct to assure orderly operation of the institution and to protect inmates and staff. Codes of conduct and their associated rewards and penalties help to manage confined populations that outnumber staff by 3 to 1. Prisons respond to the more serious violations through administrative hearings that consider the merits of the charges and appropriate penalties.

In 1986, 53% of the more than 450,000 inmates in State prisons nationwide had been charged with at least 1 rule violation during their current sentence (table 1). In 1979 the percentage of prisoners charged with rule violations was nearly the same — 54% of 275,000 inmates. (See the box on page 2 for the definition and classification

Table 2. State prison inmates charged with violating prison rules during their current sentence, by region, 1986

Region	Number of State prison inmates	Percent of inmates charged with violating prison rules during current sentence	Percent of charged inmates found guilty
U.S. total	450,416	52.7%	94.0%
Northeast	76,160	55.7	92.7
Midwest	94,850	61.7	95.2
South	193,642	49.6	94.1
West	95,764	46.8	93.3

Table 3. State prison inmates charged with violating prison rules during their current sentence, by demographic characteristics, 1986

Characteristic	Percent of inmates charged with violating prison rules during current sentence	Percent of charged inmates found guilty
All inmates	52.7%	94.0%
Sex		
Male	52.9%	94.0%
Female	47.0	93.2
Race/ethnicity		
White (non-Hispanic)	51.2%	93.8%
Black (non-Hispanic)	56.8	94.3
Hispanic ^a	46.9	93.1
Other race ^b	57.0	94.8
Age		
17 or younger	44.3%	--
18-24	60.2	95.0
25-34	55.1	94.3
35-44	46.0	92.6
45 or older	29.2	89.5
Marital status		
Married	41.2%	91.9%
Widowed	42.8	92.5
Divorced/separated	48.1	92.7
Never married	59.8	95.0
Education		
Less than 12 years	55.6%	94.4%
12 years or more	47.9	93.1
Military service		
Served in Vietnam	47.5%	92.2%
Served elsewhere	48.4	93.5
Never served	53.8	94.2
Immediate family members served time		
Yes	58.2%	94.5%
No	49.3	93.6

Note: Up to 2% missing data are excluded from the categories of race/ethnicity, age, marital status, education, military service, and immediate family members who served time.

--Too few cases to obtain a statistically reliable estimate.

^aAny race.

^bAmerican Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, and Pacific Islanders.

of rule violators and the box on page 8 for the questions asked inmates.)

The percentage of inmates charged with rule violations varied by region (table 2). About 62% of the prison inmates in the Midwest were charged with infractions; 56% in the Northeast; 50% in the South; and 47% in the West. All the regions had about the same proportion of inmates who were found guilty of the charged infractions — 94% overall.

Demographic characteristics of rule violators

The percentage of inmates who were charged with violating prison rules did not vary substantially among the categories of characteristics, except for the characteristic of age. Nonetheless, prison rule breakers were somewhat more likely than those never charged with a rule violation during their current sentence to be young, unmarried, and currently incarcerated for a property offense or a robbery. They were also more likely than other inmates to be

recidivists, to have been arrested for the first time at an early age, to have used drugs regularly, and to have completed less than 12 years of schooling.

Age was the prisoner characteristic that related most directly to prison rule violation (table 3). Except for the small number of inmates under age 18, the younger the age category, the larger the percentage of inmates charged with rule violations. About 60% of all inmates age 18 to 24 were charged with infractions during their current imprisonment, compared to 46% of inmates age 35 to 44 and 29% of those age 45 or older.

There was also some evidence that younger prisoners were more likely to be found guilty of prison rule violation charges than were older prisoners. Approximately 95% of those age 18 to 24 charged with rule violations were found guilty, compared to about 90% of those age 45 or older.

The percentage of inmates charged with infractions was higher among men (53%)

Rule violators: Definition, classification, and disposition

For purposes of this study, rule violators were inmates who were formally charged with or written up for breaking prison rules or regulations during their current admission. Being written up means receiving tickets or incident reports and having records of the incidents placed in administrative files.

Prison rule breaking involves a wide variety of misbehavior, ranging from minor infractions such as horseplay, failing to follow sanitary regulations, smoking where prohibited, and abusive language toward staff, to serious offenses such as use of contraband drugs and alcohol, possession of a weapon, offering a bribe, extortion, rioting, assault, and murder.

The 1986 Survey of Inmates of State Correctional Facilities on which this study is based, did not record the types of violations committed. A study of State prison inmates in California, Michigan, and Texas found that approximately half of all rule violators were cited for administrative infractions, a fifth for contraband, and a fifth for some

form of violence without injury.* The remainder were charged with incidents involving injury, threat, or escape.

Inmate disciplinary procedures vary from State to State and by facility within a single State. Typically, however, an inmate receives a written list of prohibited acts at admission. Prohibited acts are ranked by severity and accompanied by a schedule of punishments.

For the least serious infractions the charging officer writes an incident report and places a description of the violation in the inmate's administrative file. For moderately or very serious violations the charging officer files a report with a disciplinary hearing official or committee. The official or committee either rules directly on the merits of the charge and sets punishment or appoints an officer to investigate and report back. A review officer or board hears appeals, and the warden decides contested outcomes.

*Joan Patersilia and Paul Honig, *Prison experience of career criminals* (Santa Monica, Calif.: The Rand Corporation, 1980).

and blacks (non-Hispanic) (57%) than among women (47%) and whites (non-Hispanic) (51%).

Approximately 60% of inmates who had never married were charged with violating prison rules, compared to about 41% of married inmates. Age explained some of this difference because never-married inmates were generally younger than those who were married. About 48% of divorced or separated prisoners were charged with prison infractions.

The difference between the percentage of nonveterans charged with prison rule violations (54%) and veterans (48%) disappeared when the groups were compared while controlling for age.

Approximately 56% of those who had completed less than 12 years of schooling were charged with rule violations, compared to about 48% of the high school graduates.

Except for inmates over age 44, differences remained between the two educational-level groups even after taking into account the ages of inmates.¹

Nearly two-fifths of all inmates had an immediate relative (sibling, parent, spouse, or child) who had served or was serving a term in jail or prison. Of these inmates approximately 58% had a rule violation charge, compared to 49% of inmates from families with no other member ever in jail or prison.

Drug-use history of rule violators

State inmates who used drugs before entering prison were more likely than nondrug users to have broken prison rules. Among inmates who had used drugs at some time, approximately 57% were charged with prison violations, compared to 37% of the nonusers (table 4). In every comparison of drug users and nonusers — regular drug use, drug use during the month before the current offense, and drug use at the time of the offense — drug users had a higher percentage of rule violation.²

¹The inmate survey did not measure the inmates' literacy level and could not determine if new inmates understood a facility's written policies.

²Eighty percent of the State prison inmates had used drugs at some time in their lives.

Frequency of violations

Approximately 34% of all inmates had committed more than 1 infraction, including about 20% with 2 to 5 incident reports, 6% with 6 to 10, and 8% with 11 or more (table 5).

Approximately 34% of male inmates, compared to 30% of female inmates, were found guilty of two or more rule violations. There was, however, little or no difference between the proportions of men and women who had accumulated 2 to 5, 6 to 10, and 11 or more violations.

Blacks (non-Hispanic) and "other races" — American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, and Pacific Islanders — had the largest percentage of violators with multiple infractions, approximately 36% to 37% each, followed by whites (non-Hispanic) (32%) and Hispanics (28%).

Excluding individuals under age 18, the younger the inmate category, the higher the percentage of inmates found guilty of more than one rule violation. For example, 42% of those inmates age 18 to 24 had been found guilty two or more times while 14% of those age 45 or older had been found guilty two or more times.

Table 4. State prison inmates charged with violating prison rules during their current sentence, by drug-use history, 1986

Characteristic	Percent of inmates charged with violating prison rules during current sentence	Percent of charged inmates found guilty
All inmates	52.7%	94.0%
Ever used drugs		
No	37.3%	92.5%
Yes	56.6	94.2
Ever used drugs regularly		
No	43.0%	92.4%
Yes	58.5	94.7
Used drugs in month before admission offense		
No	43.4%	92.6%
Yes, less than once a week	58.2	92.7
Yes, at least once a week	55.2	95.3
Yes, daily or almost daily	61.3	94.9
Under drug influence at time of admission offense		
No	48.7%	93.2%
Yes	59.9	95.3

Table 5. Number of times State prison inmates were found guilty of violating prison rules during their current sentence, by selected characteristics, 1986

Characteristic	Total	Percent of inmates, by number of times found guilty of violating prison rules during current sentence				
		0	1	2-5	6-10	11 or more
All inmates	100%	50.6%	15.2%	20.3%	6.3%	7.6%
Sex						
Male	100%	50.3%	15.3%	20.4%	6.3%	7.7%
Female	100	56.4	13.2	18.3	5.5	6.6
Race/ethnicity						
White (non-Hispanic)	100%	53.1%	14.8%	19.2%	6.4%	6.5%
Black (non-Hispanic)	100	48.1	15.2	21.0	6.8	8.9
Hispanic ^a	100	57.5	14.7	17.6	4.2	6.0
Other ^b	100	47.7	16.0	24.9	4.3	7.1
Age						
17 or younger	100%	63.4%	12.6%	18.6%	5.4%	0
18-24	100	42.4	15.6	22.9	9.0	10.1
25-34	100	48.1	15.5	21.7	6.4	8.3
35-44	100	57.2	15.9	18.0	4.2	4.7
45 or older	100	74.6	11.0	9.5	1.6	3.3

Note: Categories exclude 2% missing data.

^aAny race.

^bAmerican Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, and Pacific Islanders.

Table 6. Average number of prison rule violations per inmate per year, by time served on current sentence and selected demographic characteristics, 1986

Characteristic	Total	Average annual number of infractions among inmates who had served:				
		Less than 12 months	12-23 months	24-35 months	36-59 months	60 or more months
All inmates	1.5	1.4	1.8	1.5	1.6	1.1
Sex						
Male	1.4	1.3	1.8	1.5	1.6	1.1
Female	2.0	2.0	2.6	1.8	1.9	1.3
Race/ethnicity						
White (non-Hispanic)	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.7	.9
Black (non-Hispanic)	1.5	1.3	2.1	1.5	1.7	1.1
Hispanic ^a	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.4
Other race ^b	1.3	1.1	1.2	.9	1.4	1.0
Age						
17 or younger	2.0	2.0	1.7
18-24	2.7	2.2	3.3	2.9	2.5	2.5
25-34	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.8	1.3
35-44	.6	.4	1.0	.5	.6	.7
45 or older	.3	.1	.2	.4	.2	.6
Marital status						
Married	.9	.8	1.0	.9	1.1	.6
Widowed	.7	.4	1.2	.4	.6	.8
Separated/divorced	.9	.8	1.0	1.0	1.2	.7
Never married	2.0	1.9	2.5	2.0	2.0	1.4

Note: The average number of rule violations per inmate per year was determined by dividing the total number of times an individual reported being found guilty of rule violations by the number of months he or she had spent in prison on the current admission and multiplying by 12. For inmates who had served less than 1 year, this number was their annualized average number of infractions. The results were then aggregated (numerator) and divided by the total inmate population (denominator) in each category to determine the average number of infractions per in-

mate. The "all inmates" category excludes 2% missing data. Up to 0.1% additional missing data are excluded from race and age. Data from a small number of inmates (0.3%) who reported more than 100 infractions during their current incarceration were coded as 100.

...Not applicable.

^aAny race.

^bAmerican Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, and Pacific Islanders.

Table 7. Average number of prison rule violations per inmate per year, by admission offense, 1986

Admission offense	Average annual number of infractions per inmate
All inmates	1.5
Violent offenses	1.4
Murder ^a	.9
Manslaughter	.8
Rape/sexual assault	1.1
Robbery	1.9
Assault	1.5
Kidnaping	1.1
Property offenses	1.8
Burglary	2.0
Arson	1.2
Motor vehicle theft	2.3
Fraud	1.0
Larceny	1.5
Stolen property	2.0
Drug offenses	.9
Possession	.9
Trafficking	.9
Public-order offenses	1.1
Weapons	1.1
Other public-order	1.1

Note: For a description of the calculation of the annual average number of rule violations, see note on table 6. The "all inmates" category excludes 2% missing data. Up to 1.8% additional missing data are excluded from admission offense. Data from 0.3% of the inmates who reported more than 100 infractions during their current incarceration were coded as 100.

^aIncludes nonnegligent manslaughter.

Average annual number of violations

The annual number of incidents per inmate allows comparison of groups with large differences in lengths of incarceration. On an average annual basis, inmates were found guilty of 1.5 rule violations per year (table 6). If the rate were calculated only for rule violators, the average annual number of infractions would be about twice as great, or approximately 3.0 per year.

The highest annual rate of infraction occurred among inmates in prison from 12 to 23 months (1.8 per year). Inmates who had served 60 months or more had the lowest average annual number of infractions, 1.1.

Female inmates accumulated more infractions on an average annual basis (2.0) than male inmates (1.4). Moreover, women had different rates than men in every time-served category.

Except for inmates under age 18, the younger the inmate, the larger the average annual number of infractions. Prisoners who were age 18 to 23 were found guilty of an average of 2.7 violations per year, while those who were age 45 or older were found guilty of an annual average of 0.3.

Persons admitted to prison for property offenses had the highest average annual number of rule violations (1.8) (table 7). The annual rate of infraction for those serving time for violent crimes was 1.4; for public-order crimes, 1.1; and for drug crimes, 0.9.

Recidivists, who were inmates sentenced to probation or incarceration as juveniles or adults before their current sentence, had a higher infraction rate (1.6) than first-time offenders (1.0), no matter how long they had served on their sentence (table 8).

Generally, inmates who had a greater number of prior incarcerations also were guilty of a higher average annual number of infractions. With some exceptions, inmates arrested for the first time at younger ages had a higher average annual number of infractions.

Inmates who had ever used drugs had an average of 1.7 infractions per year—more than twice the average of rule-violating inmates who had never used drugs (0.7). Similarly, inmates who had been regular drug users had an average

annual number of infractions (1.8) nearly twice that of nonregular users (1.0).

Inmates sentenced for current or past violent offenses had about the same annual average of prison rule violations as inmates with no violence in their record (1.5).

Facility characteristics relating to rule violators

The prevalence of infractions can be compared across four characteristics related to the facility: facility size, facility security level, whether inmates had work assignments, and whether inmates were permitted daily activity outside the prison.

Small prisons of 500 or fewer inmates contained a smaller percentage of inmates charged with infractions (47%) than did

either medium-size prisons of 500 to 999 inmates (56%) or large institutions of 1,000 or more (55%) (table 9).

Maximum-security prisons contained a notably larger percentage of inmates charged with infractions (62%) than either medium-security (51%) or minimum-security prisons (51%). A larger proportion of inmates with work assignments in prison (54%) than those without assignments (50%) were charged with rule breaking. Compared to inmates continuously confined within the prison, inmates who performed daily activities outside prison had been charged less frequently with rule breaking (48% versus 53%).

Table 8. Average number of prison rule violations per inmate per year, by time served on current sentence and selected criminal-history characteristics, 1985

Characteristic	Average annual number of infractions among inmates who had served:					
	Total	Less than 12 months	12-23 months	24-35 months	36-59 months	60 or more months
All inmates	1.5	1.4	1.8	1.5	1.6	1.1
History of recidivism*						
Recidivists	1.6	1.5	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.2
First-timers	1.0	.9	1.4	.9	1.1	.8
Number of prior incarcerations						
0	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.1	1.3	.8
1	1.5	1.3	1.8	1.4	1.8	1.3
2	1.5	1.3	2.0	1.8	1.6	1.0
3-5	.8	1.7	2.0	2.1	1.8	1.2
6-10	2.4	2.3	3.6	1.8	2.5	1.3
11 or more	1.8	--	--	--	--	--
Age at first arrest						
13 or younger	2.4	2.2	3.0	3.0	2.6	1.5
14-15	1.9	1.7	2.6	2.0	2.1	1.3
16-17	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.4	1.6	1.3
18-19	1.4	1.4	1.9	1.5	1.2	.9
20-21	.9	.8	1.2	.9	1.0	.7
22-23	1.0	1.1	1.0	.3	1.3	.7
24-25	.5	.5	.5	.4	.5	.6
26 or older	.4	.4	.5	.3	.4	.3
Ever used drugs						
No	.7	.7	.9	.7	.9	.7
Yes	1.7	1.6	2.0	1.7	1.8	1.2
Ever used drugs regularly						
No	1.0	.8	1.3	.9	.9	.8
Yes	1.8	1.7	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.3
Current or prior sentencing for violence						
Violent	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.1
Nonviolent	1.5	1.4	2.0	1.4	1.4	.7

Notes: For a description of the calculation of the annual average number of rule violations, see note on table 6. The "all inmates" category excludes 2% missing data. Up to 0.6% additional missing data are excluded from age at first arrest and number of prior incarcerations. Data from a small number of inmates (0.3%) who reported more than 100 infractions during

their current incarceration were coded as 100.

--Too few cases to obtain a statistically reliable estimate.

*Recidivists are defined in this report as having been previously sentenced to probation or incarceration as an adult or juvenile.

Table 9. State prison inmates charged with violating prison rules during their current sentence, by facility characteristics, 1985

Characteristic	Percent of inmates charged with violating prison rules during current sentence	Percent of charged inmates found guilty
All inmates	52.7%	94.0%
Size of facility^a		
Fewer than 500 inmates	46.9%	94.1%
500-999	55.8	94.2
1,000 or more	54.9	93.9
Facility security level		
Maximum ^b	62.4%	94.8%
Medium	51.2	93.9
Minimum	51.3	94.1
Other ^c	34.7	91.1
Work assignment in prison		
Yes	54.3%	93.7%
No	49.6	94.6
Daily activity performed outside prison		
Yes	47.9%	92.9%
No	53.4	94.2

Notes: Up to 0.5% missing data are excluded from size of facility, work assignment in prison, and daily activity performed outside prison.

^aBased on average daily population.

^bIncludes close security.

^cSpecialized units not using the maximum/medium/minimum classification included reception, classification, and diagnosis centers; medical treatment or hospital facilities; youthful offender facilities; and work release or prerelease centers.

Small prisons contained relatively fewer inmates found guilty of multiple infractions (28%) than either medium-size (36%) or large facilities (37%) (table 10). Approximately 45% of maximum-security prison inmates had more than one rule infraction, compared to 32% of inmates in medium-security and 30% in minimum-security prisons. Inmates held in small prisons broke rules at a lower rate (1.1) than did those in either medium-size (1.7) or large prisons (1.6) (table 11).

Inmates in maximum-security facilities had a significantly higher average annual

number of rule infractions (1.9) than prisoners in either medium (1.4) or minimum security (1.2). The length of time served on the current sentence did not change this relationship. Maximum-security inmates may have had more rules to follow, stricter rules, or greater difficulty in following rules than other inmates.

Punishments for rule violations

Rule violators received punishments that reflected the varied nature and seriousness of their infractions. Administered separately or in combination, these penal-

ties involved additional restrictions on movement, relocation, loss of privileges, extra work, and official warnings.

Approximately 31% of all rule violators were placed in solitary confinement or segregation for their most recent infraction, and about 25% forfeited goodtime (table 12). Approximately 16% were confined to their cell or quarters, 15% lost entertainment or recreation liberties, and 13% lost commissary privileges. Smaller percentages of rule violators received formal reprimands, extra work, or transfers to other institutions or higher custody levels. Approximately 7% received either no punishment or a suspended punishment.

Table 10. State prison inmates by number of times found guilty of violating prison rules during their current sentence, by facility size and security level, 1986

Characteristic	Total	Percent of inmates, by number of times found guilty of violating prison rules during current sentence				
		0	1	2-5	6-10	11 or more
All inmates	100%	51.3%	15.0%	20.0%	6.2%	7.5%
Size of facility^a						
Fewer than 500 inmates	100	56.4	16.1	19.1	4.5	3.9
500-999	100	48.2	16.1	20.5	7.1	8.1
1,000 or more	100	49.2	13.7	20.4	6.9	9.8
Facility security level						
Maximum ^b	100	41.2	14.0	22.8	8.7	13.3
Medium	100	52.3	15.6	19.7	6.0	6.4
Minimum	100	51.9	19.2	22.1	4.7	3.1
Other ^c	100	66.9	13.7	14.0	3.1	2.3

Note: Categories exclude 2% missing data.

^aBased on average daily population.

^bIncludes close security.

^cSpecialized facilities not using the maximum/

medium/minimum classification included reception, classification, and diagnosis centers; medical treatment units and hospitals; youthful offender facilities; and work release and prerelease centers.

Table 11. Average number of prison rule violations per inmate per year, by time served on current sentence, facility size, and security level, 1986

Characteristic	Total	Average annual number of infractions among inmates who had served:				
		Less than 12 months	12-23 months	24-35 months	36-59 months	60 or more months
All inmates	1.5	1.4	1.8	1.5	1.6	1.1
Size of facility^a						
Fewer than 500 inmates	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.0	1.0	.7
500-999	1.7	1.7	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.1
1,000 or more	1.6	1.3	2.1	1.7	1.9	1.2
Facility security level						
Maximum ^b	1.9	1.6	2.3	2.3	2.3	1.3
Medium	1.4	1.4	1.8	1.4	1.3	.9
Minimum	1.2	1.4	1.3	.9	.7	—
Other ^c	.8	1.0	1.0	.4	.6	—

Note: For a description of the calculation of the annual average number of rule violations, see note on table 6. The "all inmates" category excludes 2% missing data. Data from a small number of inmates (0.3%) who reported more than 100 infractions during their current incarceration were coded as 100.
--Too few cases to obtain a statistically reliable estimate.

^aBased on average daily population.

^bIncludes close security.

^cSpecialized facilities not using the maximum/medium/minimum classification included reception, classification, and diagnosis centers; medical treatment units, and hospitals; youthful offender facilities; and work release and prerelease centers.

Table 12. Punishments received by prison rule violators for their most recent infraction, 1986

Punishment	Inmates who received punishment, as a percent of:	
	All rule violators	Total inmate population
Solitary confinement or segregation	30.8%	14.8%
Loss of goodtime	25.0	12.0
Confinement to own cell or quarters	15.8	7.6
Loss of entertainment or recreational privileges	15.4	7.4
Loss of commissary or store privileges	13.1	6.3
Reprimand	9.4	4.5
Extra work	8.5	4.0
Loss of job assignment	7.0	3.4
Loss of visiting privileges	6.3	3.0
Higher custody level within facility	5.8	2.8
Transfer to another facility	5.6	2.7
No punishment or punishment suspended	6.7	3.2

Note: The percent of inmates who received each type of punishment sum to more than 100% because some inmates received more than 1 punishment for an infraction. The table excludes approximately 3% of all inmates who received punishment in the form of fines, fees, or restitution requirements or who lost rights to participate in drug, alcohol, vocational, or educational programs and 1% for whom type of punishment was not reported.

For their most recent infraction men were more likely than women to have been placed in solitary confinement or segregation (31% versus 23%) and to have forfeited goodtime (25% versus 20%) (table 13). But relatively more women than men were assigned to extra work (13% versus 8%).

For prisoners who broke the rules there were no large disparities in punishments received by whites and blacks. Approximately 22% of Hispanics, compared to 14% of non-Hispanics, lost entertainment or recreational privileges, and 19% of Hispanic inmates versus 13% or less of non-Hispanics lost commissary privileges. How much regional concentration and custody levels influenced these differences by ethnicity could not be determined.

Facility size and security level generally made little difference in how rule violators were punished. There were a few exceptions, however. Solitary confinement was used more frequently in medium-size facilities (36%) and less frequently in minimum-security facilities (24%) (table 14).

Loss of goodtime was applied more often in small facilities (29%) and in minimum-security facilities (30%). Some inmates reporting on rule violations during their current sentence may have been transferred between facilities of different sizes or security levels.

Table 13. Punishment received by prison rule violators for their most recent infraction, by sex and race/ethnicity, 1986

Punishment	Percent of rule violators who received punishment				
	Sex		Race/ethnicity ^a		
	Male	Female	White non-Hispanic	Black non-Hispanic	Hispanic ^b
Solitary confinement or segregation	31.2%	23.2%	31.4%	31.5%	27.5%
Loss of goodtime	25.3	19.8	25.4	23.8	28.4
Confinement to own cell or quarters	15.7	17.0	14.8	15.0	20.5
Loss of entertainment or recreational privileges	15.3	17.3	14.8	13.6	22.4
Loss of commissary or store privileges	13.2	9.4	11.7	12.5	19.3
Reprimand	9.4	8.8	10.7	8.5	7.3
Extra work	8.3	12.9	9.0	7.5	9.2
Loss of job assignment	7.1	4.6	7.1	5.9	11.2
Loss of visiting privileges	6.4	5.0	5.6	5.9	8.0
Higher custody level within facility	5.9	4.4	6.8	4.7	8.5
Transfer to another facility	5.7	2.7	5.3	5.2	8.2
No punishment or punishment suspended	6.8	5.9	7.9	5.9	5.7

Note: The table excludes approximately 3% of all inmates who received punishment in the form of fines, fees, or restitution requirements or who lost rights to participate in drug, alcohol, vocational, or educational programs and 1% for whom type of punishment was not reported.

^aPersons of races other than white or black were not included because there were too few cases for statistically valid estimates.

^bAny race.

Table 14. Punishment received by prison rule violators for their most recent infraction, by facility size and security level, 1986

Punishment	Percent of rule violators who received punishment					
	Facility size ^a			Facility security level ^b		
	Fewer than 500 inmates	500-999	1,000 or more	Maximum	Medium	Minimum
Solitary confinement or segregation	28.5%	36.2%	29.4%	34.9%	31.6%	23.6%
Loss of goodtime	28.5	23.4	23.9	24.2	22.9	29.6
Confinement to own cell or quarters	13.7	14.3	17.8	17.9	15.7	13.4
Loss of entertainment or recreational privileges	14.3	15.4	16.0	15.3	15.7	17.3
Loss of commissary or store privileges	9.0	13.4	15.2	18.3	9.5	12.6
Reprimand	9.9	9.8	8.8	9.2	9.7	9.5
Extra work	10.4	8.3	7.4	4.8	9.0	15.5
Loss of job assignment	6.4	5.5	8.2	6.8	7.8	6.4
Loss of visiting privileges	6.2	6.6	6.2	5.2	6.3	8.4
Higher custody level within facility	5.1	5.4	6.5	6.9	5.5	3.3
Transfer to another facility	6.7	4.6	5.5	5.5	5.6	7.0
No punishment or punishment suspended	7.3	7.5	6.0	5.7	7.1	8.3

Note: The table excludes approximately 3% of all inmates who received punishment in the form of fines, fees, or restitution requirements or who lost rights to participate in drug, alcohol, vocational, or educational programs and 1% for whom type of punishment was not reported.

^aBased on average daily population.

^bExcludes inmates in specialized facilities not using the maximum/medium/minimum classification, including reception, classification, and diagnosis centers; medical treatment units; hospitals; youthful offender facilities; and work release and prerelease centers.

Methodology

The Survey of Inmates of State Correctional Facilities — part of the National Prisoner Statistics Program — is sponsored and designed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics and is carried out every 5 or 6 years. The data are collected for BJS by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

The sample design is a stratified two-stage selection with the probabilities proportional to the size of the correctional facility. The sample is selected independently from two frames, one for males only and a second to allow an oversample of females. Within each frame, facilities are stratified by type (prison versus community corrections facility) and by census region. In the second stage, interviewers visit each selected facility and select a sample of inmates using predetermined sampling procedures. In 1979, 11,397 interviews were conducted at 215 prisons with a selected sample of about 12,000. In 1986, 13,711 interviews were conducted at 275 facilities from a sample of about 15,000.

Based on these interviews, estimates of the entire inmate population were developed that used a weighting factor derived from the original probability of selection in the sample. This factor was then adjusted for variable rates of nonresponse and with two different ratio adjustments. The first accounts for sample effects; the second is intended to bring the sample population as closely into agreement as possible with the known distribution of the entire inmate population.

All comparisons presented in this report are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, except those that include the phrase "some evidence," which are significant at the 90% confidence level. Information concerning facility size and security level was based on the 1984 Census of State Adult Correctional Facilities, a complete enumeration of prisons and community-based correctional facilities (NCJ-105585, 8/87).

The number of inmates in facilities of each security type and size selected by the survey sample may have differed from the same groups identified in the census.

Questions asked State prison inmates about their prison rule infractions

34a. Since your admission on [the most serious offense] have you been formally charged with or written up for breaking any of the prison rules? (NOTE to interviewer: "Written up" includes tickets, incident reports, violations, etc.)

- ☐ Yes — 34b
☐ No — skip
☐ Don't know — skip

34b. How many times?
_____ Times
☐ Don't know

34c. Of those times, how many times were you found guilty?
☐ None — skip
_____ Times
☐ Don't know — skip

34d-g. Of those times you were found guilty, what disciplinary actions took place?

- 1 Solitary confinement or segregation
- 2 Confinement to own cell or quarters
- 3 Loss of "good/gain time"
- 4 Higher custody level within facility
- 5 Loss of entertainment/recreation privileges
- 6 Loss of commissary/store privileges
- 7 Reprimand
- 8 Extra work
- 9 Transfer to another facility
- 10 Paid fee/restitution
- 11 Loss of job assignment
- 12 Loss of visiting privileges
- 13 Other — specify _____
- 14 No punishment/punishment suspended

Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Reports are prepared principally by BJS staff. This report was written by James Stephan. Christopher Innes and Sophie Bowen provided statistical assistance. Lawrence Greenfeld and Allen Beck offered analytical suggestions. Tom Hester edited the report. Marilyn Marbrook administered publication, assisted by Yvonne Boston, Betty Sherman, and Jayne Pugh.

December 1989, NCJ-120344

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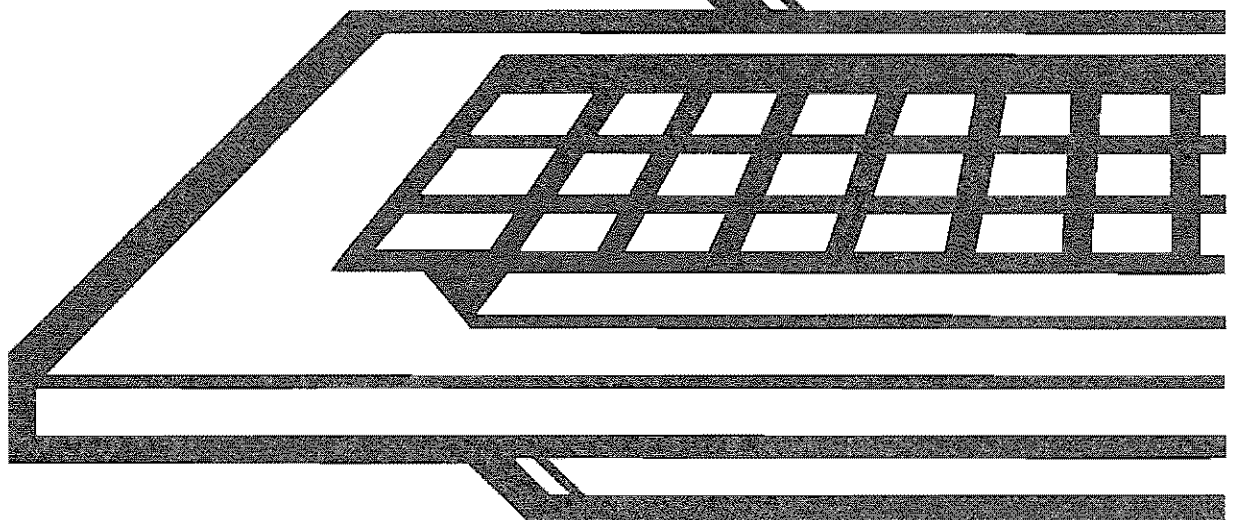
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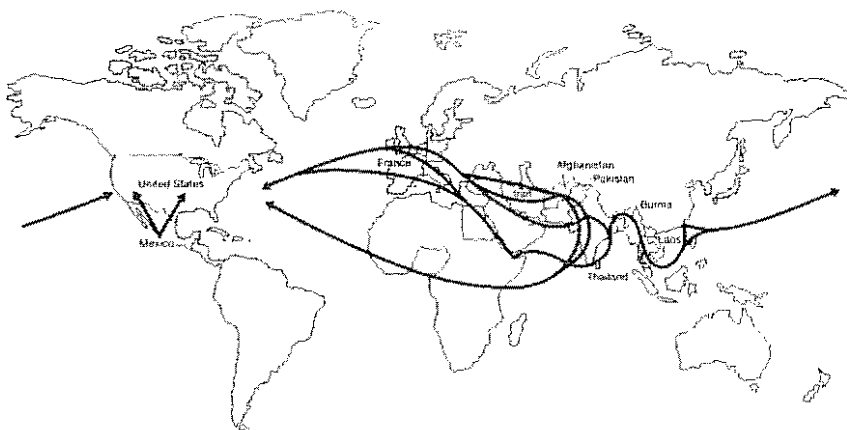
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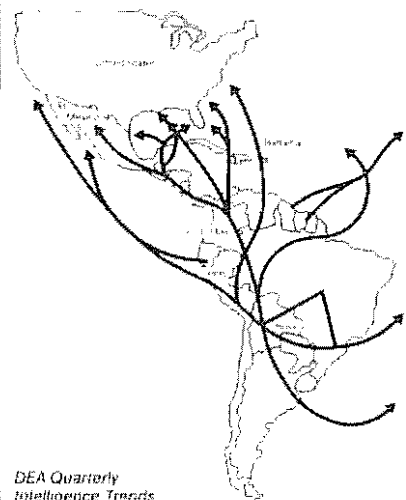
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