

Recidivism Rates of Fire Camp Participants Released from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in Fiscal Year 2014-15

Summary

Despite having characteristics that are typically associated with higher rates of reoffending (e.g. non-serious and non-violent property and drug offenders), offenders released from fire camps had recidivism rates that were lower than or nearly equal to offenders who did not participate in fire camps during their incarceration. The three-year conviction rate for offenders who were released from a fire camp was 45.1 percent, which is slightly lower than rates for offenders with some fire camp experience (49.4 percent) and offenders with no fire camp experience (49.1 percent).

The duration for which offenders participated in fire camps appears to influence recidivism rates, with those spending more time in fire camps recidivating at lower rates than those spending less time. Offenders who were released after spending a year or longer in a fire camp had the best recidivism outcomes, with a three-year conviction rate of 32.5 percent. Fire camp participation also appears to influence recidivism rates when examined by age group: younger offenders are generally among the highest recidivating groups of offenders, but younger offenders released from fire camps had lower rates than young offenders without fire camp experience.

Offenders released from fire camps had slightly lower recidivism rates than fire camp-eligible offenders who did not participate in fire camps. The three-year conviction rate for offenders released from fire camps was 3.4 percentage points lower (45.1 percent) than the rate for fire camp eligible offenders who did not participate in camps (48.5 percent). While further research is needed to determine if the higher rates among fire camp eligible offenders is associated with the demographic composition of the group, fire camp experience, or a combination of multiple factors, this difference could suggest that participation in a fire camp positively influences recidivism rates.

Profile of Fire Camp Releases and Participants

Of the 39,205 offenders released from California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) institutions in Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-15, approximately seven percent of the release cohort (2,556 offenders) were released from a fire camp (fire camp releases) and an additional three percent (1,112 offenders) had some fire camp participation (fire camp participants) during their most recent stay at CDCR, but were released from an adult institution instead of a fire camp.ⁱ Over 90 percent of offenders (31,515 offenders) released during FY 2014-15 did not participate in a fire camp (non-fire camp participants) and 4,022 offenders were dropped from this analysis because they were either sentenced to an indeterminate term (lifer) or required to register under Penal Code 290 (sex registrants) and were therefore ineligible to participate in a fire camp.ⁱⁱ

Because fire camp releases and fire camp participants were released from different correctional settings and the reason for the end of a fire camp participant's tenure in a fire camp was not accounted for when calculating recidivism rates, these two groups are treated separately.ⁱⁱⁱ The intent of this report is to examine differences in recidivism rates among offenders with varying levels of experience in a fire camp, as well as no fire camp experience, to better understand how fire camps influence post-release outcomes. Fire camp releases had the most consistent fire camp experience (both participation in and release from a fire camp) and are therefore the focus of this report. It should be noted that fire camp

releases and fire camp participants include offenders with a wide range of fire camp assignments (e.g. firefighters, cooks, porters) and rates are not specific to firefighters.

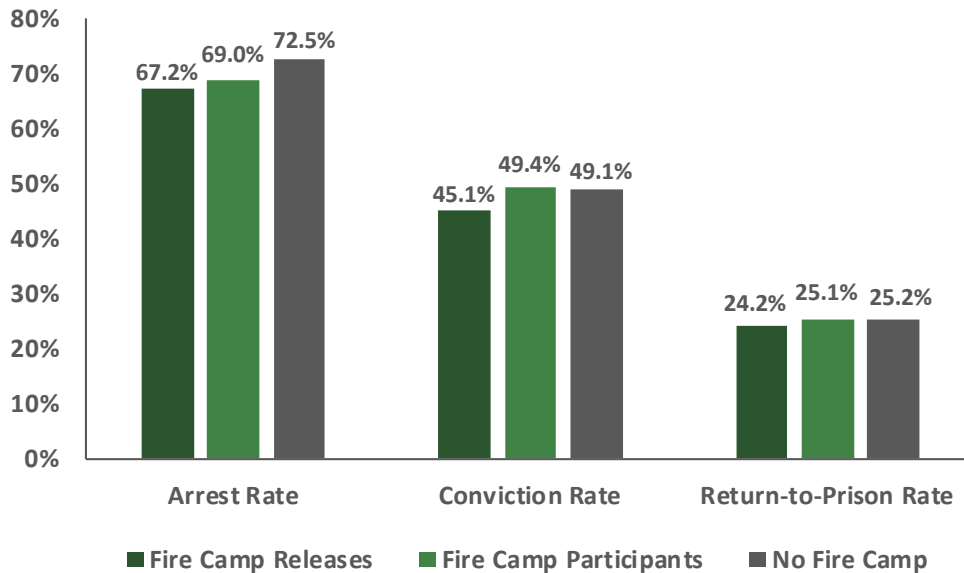
When compared to offenders with some or no fire camp experience, fire camp releases were generally more likely to be released to Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS) than parole supervision (Appendix A). Fire camp releases were also more likely to have high property and high drug California Static Risk Assessment (CSRA) scores and less likely to have a high violence risk score when compared to offenders with some or no fire camp experience.^{iv} Finally, a higher percentage of fire camp releases and participants were committed to prison for property and drug crimes than non-fire camp participants, who were more likely to be committed to prison for crimes against persons. Most fire camp releases were sentenced to a determinate term, second strikers, or released under Proposition 47.

Many of the characteristics of fire camp releases and participants are historically associated with higher recidivism rates: younger offenders who commit less serious and less violent crimes such as property and drug crimes and have shorter prison stays, typically recidivate at higher rates than older offenders with longer prison stays for more serious and violent crimes.^v Although many complex factors contribute to patterns of reoffending among inmates, higher rates of reoffending among fire camp releases and participants could be expected due to the prevalence of characteristics that are highly associated with recidivism.

Recidivism Rates (Arrests, Convictions and Returns to Prison)

CDCR uses three measures of recidivism with the three-year conviction rate serving as the primary measure and the three-year arrest and return-to-prison rates serving as supplemental measures of recidivism.^{vi} The three-year conviction rate for fire camp releases was 45.1 percent, which is slightly lower than rates for fire camp participants who released from an adult institution (49.4 percent) and offenders with no fire camp experience (49.1 percent).^{vii} The recidivism rate for all 39,205 offenders released during the same time period, regardless of participation in a fire camp, was 46.5 percent, slightly higher than the recidivism rate of fire camp releases (45.1 percent).^{viii} Arrest rates followed a similar pattern: the three-year arrest rate for fire camp releases was 67.2 percent, the rate for fire camp participants was 69.0 percent and the rate for non-fire camp participants was 72.5 percent. The three-year return-to-prison rate was 24.2 percent for fire camp releases, 25.1 percent for fire camp participants and 25.2 percent offenders without fire camp experience (Appendix B).

Three-Year Arrest, Conviction, and Return-to-Prison Rates for Fire Camp Releases, Fire Camp Participants and Non-Fire Camp Participants



One-, two- and three-year arrest, conviction and return-to-prison rates for each of the three groups may be found in Appendix B. Direct comparisons among the three groups are difficult to make because the groups vary widely in their composition (e.g. in the demographics and characteristics of offenders). For example, the non-fire camp group is large (with over 90 percent of all releases) and contains higher numbers of offenders associated with low recidivism rates (e.g. more offenders serving longer prison terms for crimes against persons), which may influence the overall recidivism rate downward.^{ix} Conversely, the fire camp release and fire camp participant groups have high numbers of young property and drug offenders, which may influence the overall recidivism rate upward. Further, the groups of fire camp releases and participants are much smaller than non-fire camp releases, and nuances associated with individual cases have a greater impact on rates.^x

Type of Recidivism (Felony or Misdemeanor) for Fire Camp Releases

Of the 2,556 offenders released from a fire camp in FY 2014-15, 45.1 percent or 1,152 offenders were convicted within three years of their release. Half of the 1,152 convictions were felony convictions (50.2 percent) and half were misdemeanor convictions (49.8 percent). As shown in the table, nearly a quarter (24.7 percent) of all convictions were for misdemeanor drug/alcohol crimes, followed by felony property crimes (15.7 percent) and other felony crimes (13.2 percent).^{xi}

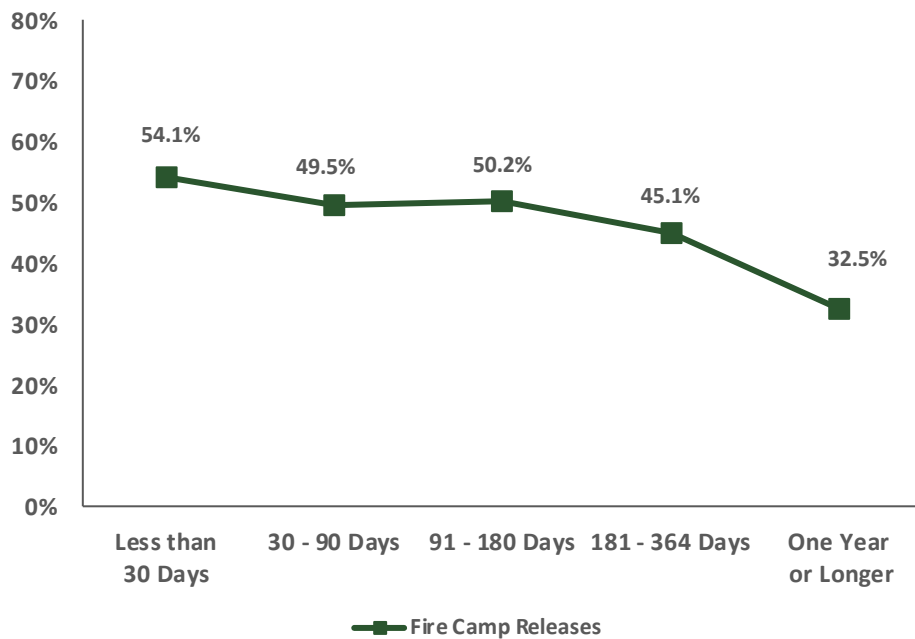
Type of Conviction for Fire Camp Releases	Number	Percent
Felony Convictions	578	50.2%
Felony Property Crimes	181	15.7%
Felony Other Crimes	152	13.2%
Felony Crimes Against Persons	140	12.2%
Felony Drug/Alcohol Crimes	105	9.1%
Misdemeanor Convictions	574	49.8%
Misdemeanor Drug/Alcohol Crimes	284	24.7%
Misdemeanor Property Crimes	113	9.8%
Misdemeanor Crimes Against Persons	103	8.9%
Misdemeanor Other Crimes	74	6.4%
Total	1,152	100.0%

The type of conviction for fire camp releases is consistent with fire camp participants and non-fire camp participants with a few exceptions: when compared with fire camp participants and non-fire camp participants, a larger percentage of convictions among fire camp releases were for felony property or felony drug/alcohol crimes, as well as misdemeanor drug/alcohol crimes (Appendix C). Additionally, fire camp releases were less likely to be convicted of felony or misdemeanor crimes against persons than fire camp participants and non-fire camp participants.

Time Spent in a Fire Camp and Its Influence on Recidivism

For both fire camp releases and fire camp participants, the amount of time spent in the fire camp made a difference in recidivism rates, particularly for those released from and spending one year or longer in a fire camp.^{xii} When a fire camp release spent less than one year in a fire camp, the recidivism rates ranged from 54.1 percent (less than 30 days in a fire camp) to 45.1 percent (between 181 and 364 days), as shown in the figure below. The rate drops substantially, to 32.5 percent, when offenders were released from a fire camp and stayed in the fire camp for one year or longer.

Three-Year Conviction Rate for Fire Camp Releases by Time Spent in a Fire Camp



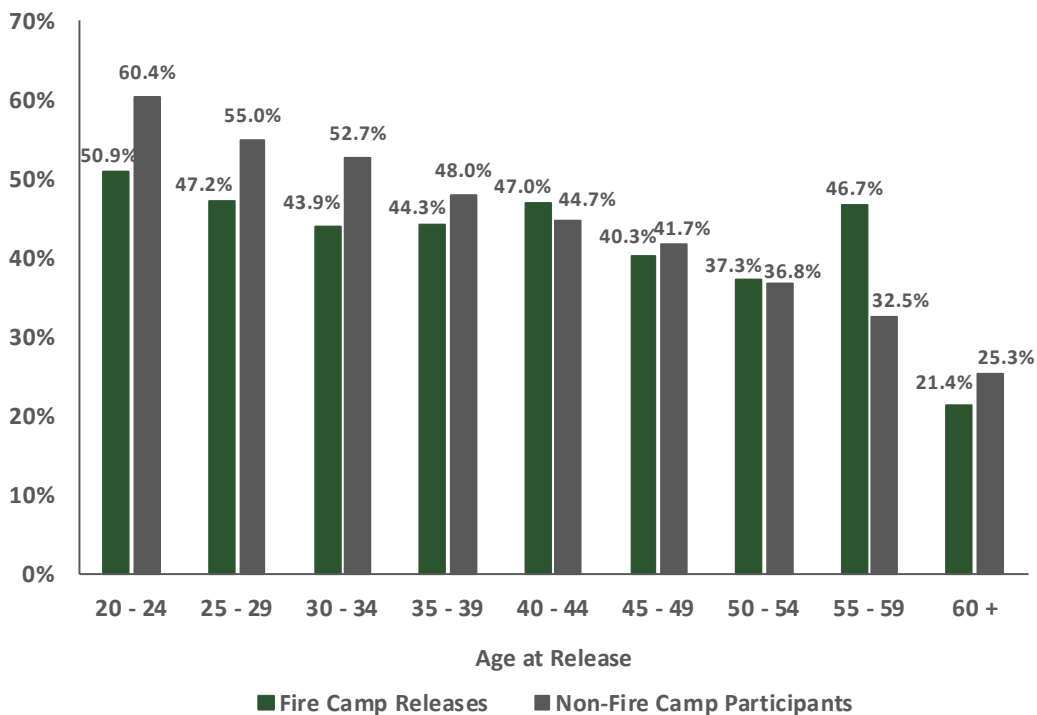
Although less pronounced, offenders who were not released from a fire camp but participated in a fire camp for a year or longer prior to their release also had better outcomes: the three-year conviction rate was 41.9 percent for fire camp participants with a stay of one year or longer and peaked at 61.0 percent for those with a stay of 30 to 90 days (Appendix D). These rates indicate the best outcomes occur when offenders are released from a fire camp after a stay of one year or longer.

Age, Fire Camp Participation and Recidivism

Age is well documented as one of the strongest predictors of recidivism with younger offenders, particularly those convicted of property and drug/alcohol crimes, associated with high recidivism rates. Older offenders, especially those who serve long prison sentences, are often associated with some of the lowest recidivism rates. For this reason, age is heavily weighted factor in determining an offender’s risk of recidivism through the CSRA. A review of the recidivism rates by age group for all 39,205 offenders released from CDCR during FY 2014-15 affirms age as a predictor of recidivism: as the age group of the offenders increases, the rate consistently decreases.^{xiii} This same pattern holds true when looking at recidivism rates for all three groups of releases (Appendix E). Fire camp releases ages 20 to 24 had a three-year conviction rate of 50.9 percent and offenders 60 and over had a three-year conviction rate of 21.4 percent.

A notable exception to the age and recidivism relationship exists among fire camp releases. While younger offenders generally had higher rates than older offenders, younger offenders released from fire camps had lower rates than non-fire camp participants in the same age group, as shown in the figure below. Further, the difference in recidivism rates within age groups is most pronounced among younger age groups (e.g. offenders ages 20 to 34) and the gap closes as the age of the offender increases (e.g. offenders ages 50 to 54 in both groups had rates that were nearly equal). In some cases, fire camp releases in older age groups had higher recidivism rates than the corresponding age group of offenders without fire camp experience (e.g. offenders ages 40 to 44 and 55 to 59). These findings may indicate that participation in fire camps is most effective in reducing recidivism in younger age groups, a group that is typically identified as one of the highest recidivating groups of offenders.^{xiv}

Three-Year Conviction Rate by Age at Release for Fire Camp Releases and Non-Fire Camp Participants



Recidivism Rates by Serious and Violent Offenses and Commitment Offense Category

Recidivism rates for fire camp releases, fire camp participants and non-fire camp participants are provided by serious and violent commitment offense, as well as commitment offense category (the offense for which an offender was most recently committed to CDCR) in Appendix E. In general, the rates are consistent across the three groups and follow reoffending patterns observed in the complete FY 2014-15 release cohort, as well as previous cohorts of releases: non-serious and non-violent drug and property offenders tend to have higher recidivism rates than serious or violent offenders that commit crimes against persons. Across all three categories of release types (fire camp releases, fire camp participants and non-fire camp participants), non-serious/non-violent offenders recidivated at higher rates than offenders with a serious or violent offense, and drug and property offenders recidivated at higher rates than offenders who committed crimes against persons.

In most cases, fire camp releases have lower conviction rates than fire camp participants and non-fire camp participants when comparing rates by serious/violent offenses and commitment offense categories, which is reflective of the overall lower rates among fire camp releases. With the exception of fire camp releases and fire camp participants with a serious offense where the three-year conviction rate was equal (42.7 percent), the three-year conviction rate for fire camp releases was lower than the rate of fire camp participants and non-fire camp participants when examined by serious and violent offenses. Similarly, fire camp releases had lower recidivism rates across the four commitment offense categories (crimes against persons, property crimes, drug crimes and other crimes) when compared to fire camp participants and non-fire camp participants.

When compared to fire camp releases and non-fire camp participants, fire camp participants had higher recidivism rates when examined by serious/violent offense and commitment offense category, in some cases (i.e. offenders with non-serious/non-violent offenses, violent offenses and those committed for property or other crimes). A contributing factor to the higher rates observed among fire camp participants is likely the composition of this group of offenders.^{xv} The presence of a large number of offenders who are more likely to recidivate (e.g. non-serious and non-violent property and drug offenders) in fire camp groups could influence the rate for those groups upward, while the non-fire camp participant group is comprised of offenders belonging to older age groups and has more serious/violent offenders with longer prison terms, who tend to influence recidivism rates downward.

It should be noted that the fire camp release and fire camp participant groups are relatively similar in their demographics and characteristics, although fire camp releases recidivated at lower rates than fire camp participants (Appendices A and B). These findings indicate better post-release outcomes occur for offenders released from a fire camp, in contrast with those who only participated in a fire camp.^{xvi}

Methodology and Limitations

The three groups presented in this report (fire camp releases, fire camp participants and non-fire camp participants) are subgroups of offenders examined in the “Recidivism Report for Offenders Released from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in Fiscal Year 2014-15”. Development of one-, two-, and three-year recidivism rates follow the methods detailed in Section 6. Evaluation Design of the report.^{xvii} Similarly, arrest and conviction data only include offenders with a Department of Justice (DOJ) automated rap sheet, while return-to-prison data include all offenders released from CDCR during FY 2014-15.^{xviii}

Each subgroup of offenders presented in this report has limitations and caution should be exercised when interpreting rates, particularly when comparing rates among subgroups. Fire camp releases include offenders who participated in and were released from a fire camp, while fire camp participants include those who participated in a fire camp at some point during their most recent stay at CDCR, but were not released from a fire camp. Instead, fire camp participants were released from a CDCR adult institution. Because these two groups were released from different correctional settings and the reason for the end of a fire camp participant’s tenure in a fire camp was not accounted for when calculating recidivism rates, these two groups were treated separately.

Fire camp participants can be returned to an institution prior to their release for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to: medical, dental, court and disciplinary reasons, or if an offender is paroling from an institution, rather than the fire camp. Further, the duration for which fire camp participants stayed in fire camps varied substantially: some fire camp participants participated in a fire camp for less than 30 days prior to returning to a CDCR adult institution, while some fire camp participants participated in a fire camp for a year or longer before returning to an institution. For these reasons, the make-up of this group varies widely and their differences could influence recidivism rates.^{xix} Recidivism rates for this group should be interpreted with caution, as the reason for a participant’s departure from a fire camp could further influence recidivism rates and was not examined in this report.

Non-fire camp participants (offenders without fire camp experience) represent the largest group of offenders and also vary widely in their makeup (e.g. includes offenders serving short prison stays for drug and property offenses, as well as those serving much longer sentences for more serious and violent offenses). These differences could also influence recidivism rates and make comparisons between groups difficult. For the purposes of this report, offenders sentenced to an indeterminate term (lifers) and offenders required to register under Penal Code 290 (sex registrants) were removed from the non-fire camp participant group, as they are ineligible for fire camps. These two groups, particularly lifers, are among some of the lowest recidivating groups released by CDCR and their inclusion in the non-fire camp participant group would influence that particular group’s rate downward.^{xx}

Finally, it is beyond the scope of this report to estimate the impact of fire camp participation on recidivism rates. While an examination of fire camp data shows that participation and release from a fire camp (particularly for those who spend a year or longer in the fire camp) may have a positive influence on reoffending outcomes, the precise impact of participation cannot be measured. Further, this report does not consider participation in other in-prison programs or services that may or may not influence recidivism outcomes.

Appendix A – Demographics and Characteristics of Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 by Fire Camp Participation

Demographics and Characteristics	Fire Camp Releases		Fire Camp Participants		No Fire Camp	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	2,556	100.0%	1,112	100.0%	31,515	100.0%
Gender						
Male	2,384	93.3%	1,002	90.1%	29,123	92.4%
Female	172	6.7%	110	9.9%	2,392	7.6%
Age at Release						
18 - 19	3	0.1%	1	0.1%	281	0.9%
20 - 24	322	12.6%	221	19.9%	4,558	14.5%
25 - 29	483	18.9%	236	21.2%	5,840	18.5%
30 - 34	537	21.0%	228	20.5%	5,535	17.6%
35 - 39	422	16.5%	140	12.6%	4,368	13.9%
40 - 44	296	11.6%	111	10.0%	3,277	10.4%
45 - 49	258	10.1%	88	7.9%	3,036	9.6%
50 - 54	161	6.3%	49	4.4%	2,539	8.1%
55 - 59	60	2.3%	28	2.5%	1,326	4.2%
60 and over	14	0.5%	10	0.9%	755	2.4%
Release Type						
Parole	1,173	45.9%	590	53.1%	13,806	43.8%
PRCS	1,349	52.8%	499	44.9%	16,978	53.9%
Direct Discharge	34	1.3%	23	2.1%	731	2.3%
Risk Level						
Low	438	17.1%	174	15.6%	6,487	20.6%
Moderate	985	38.5%	408	36.7%	9,640	30.6%
High Drug	280	11.0%	105	9.4%	2,434	7.7%
High Property	437	17.1%	197	17.7%	4,281	13.6%
High Violence	416	16.3%	228	20.5%	8,671	27.5%
Missing	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.0%
Sentence Type						
Proposition 47	264	10.3%	174	15.6%	3,614	11.5%
Determinate Sentence	1,371	53.6%	540	48.6%	20,475	65.0%
Second Striker	921	36.0%	398	35.8%	7,426	23.6%
Serious or Violent Offense						
Serious	574	22.5%	211	19.0%	7,039	22.3%
Violent	424	16.6%	261	23.5%	4,169	13.2%
Non-Serious/Non-Violent	1,558	61.0%	640	57.6%	20,307	64.4%
Offense Category						
Crimes Against Persons	709	27.7%	324	29.1%	10,836	34.4%
Property Crimes	860	33.6%	405	36.4%	8,236	26.1%
Drug Crimes	596	23.3%	248	22.3%	6,478	20.6%
Other Crimes	391	15.3%	135	12.1%	5,965	18.9%

Appendix B – Recidivism Rates for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 by Fire Camp Participation

Arrest Rates

Release Type	Released	One-Year		Two-Year		Three-Year	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Fire Camp Release	2,556	1,146	44.8%	1,546	60.5%	1,718	67.2%
Fire Camp Participant	1,112	549	49.4%	705	63.4%	767	69.0%
No Fire Camp	31,515	17,039	54.1%	21,085	66.9%	22,854	72.5%
Total	35,183	18,734	53.2%	23,336	66.3%	25,339	72.0%

Conviction Rates

Release Type	Released	One-Year		Two-Year		Three-Year	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Fire Camp Release	2,556	433	16.9%	875	34.2%	1,152	45.1%
Fire Camp Participant	1,112	193	17.4%	420	37.8%	549	49.4%
No Fire Camp	31,515	6,921	22.0%	12,221	38.8%	15,464	49.1%
Total	35,183	7,547	21.5%	13,516	38.4%	17,165	48.8%

Return Rates

Release Type	Released	One-Year		Two-Year		Three-Year	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Fire Camp Release	2,557	141	5.5%	405	15.8%	619	24.2%
Fire Camp Participant	1,114	55	4.9%	186	16.7%	280	25.1%
No Fire Camp	31,642	2,242	7.1%	5,891	18.6%	7,969	25.2%
Total	35,313	2,438	6.9%	6,482	18.4%	8,868	25.1%

Appendix C – Type of Conviction for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 by Fire Camp Participation

Type of Conviction for All Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 by Fire Camp Participation (Includes Offenders with No Conviction)

Type of Conviction	Fire Camp Releases		Fire Camp Participants		No Fire Camp	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No Conviction	1,404	54.9%	563	50.6%	16,051	50.9%
Felony Convictions	578	22.6%	253	22.8%	7,245	23.0%
Felony Property Crimes	181	7.1%	66	5.9%	1,972	6.3%
Felony Other Crimes	152	5.9%	71	6.4%	1,785	5.7%
Felony Crimes Against Persons	140	5.5%	71	6.4%	2,446	7.8%
Felony Drug/Alcohol Crimes	105	4.1%	45	4.0%	1,042	3.3%
Misdemeanor Convictions	574	22.5%	296	26.6%	8,219	26.1%
Misdemeanor Drug/Alcohol Crimes	284	11.1%	133	12.0%	3,385	10.7%
Misdemeanor Property Crimes	113	4.4%	75	6.7%	1,877	6.0%
Misdemeanor Crimes Against Persons	103	4.0%	54	4.9%	1,794	5.7%
Misdemeanor Other Crimes	74	2.9%	34	3.1%	1,163	3.7%
Total	2,556	100.0%	1,112	100.0%	31,515	100.0%

Type of Conviction for the 17,165 Offenders Convicted During the Three-Year Follow-Up Period by Fire Camp Participation (Includes Only Those Convicted)

Type of Conviction	Fire Camp Releases		Fire Camp Participants		No Fire Camp	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Felony Convictions	578	50.2%	253	46.1%	7,245	46.9%
Felony Property Crimes	181	15.7%	66	12.0%	1,972	12.8%
Felony Other Crimes	152	13.2%	71	12.9%	1,785	11.5%
Felony Crimes Against Persons	140	12.2%	71	12.9%	2,446	15.8%
Felony Drug/Alcohol Crimes	105	9.1%	45	8.2%	1,042	6.7%
Misdemeanor Convictions	574	49.8%	296	53.9%	8,219	53.1%
Misdemeanor Drug/Alcohol Crimes	284	24.7%	133	24.2%	3,385	21.9%
Misdemeanor Property Crimes	113	9.8%	75	13.7%	1,877	12.1%
Misdemeanor Crimes Against Persons	103	8.9%	54	9.8%	1,794	11.6%
Misdemeanor Other Crimes	74	6.4%	34	6.2%	1,163	7.5%
Total	1,152	100.0%	549	100.0%	15,464	100.0%

Appendix D – Three-Year Conviction Rate by Time Spent in a Fire Camp for Fire Camp Releases and Fire Camp Participants

Fire Camp Stay	Fire Camp Releases			Fire Camp Participants		
	Released	Convicted	Percent	Released	Convicted	Percent
Less than 30 Days	218	118	54.1%	69	37	53.6%
30 - 90 Days	440	218	49.5%	164	100	61.0%
91 - 180 Days	638	320	50.2%	224	114	50.9%
181 - 364 Days	690	311	45.1%	326	160	49.1%
One Year or Longer	570	185	32.5%	329	138	41.9%
Total	2,556	1,152	45.1%	1,112	549	49.4%

Appendix E – Recidivism Rates for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 by Fire Camp Participation and Select Demographics and Characteristics

Three-Year Conviction Rates by Age at Release and Fire Camp Participation

Age Group	Fire Camp Releases			Fire Camp Participants			No Fire Camp		
	Released	Convicted	Percent	Released	Convicted	Percent	Released	Convicted	Percent
18 - 19	3	3	N/A	1	0	N/A	281	198	70.5%
20 - 24	322	164	50.9%	221	119	53.8%	4,558	2,751	60.4%
25 - 29	483	228	47.2%	236	128	54.2%	5,840	3,213	55.0%
30 - 34	537	236	43.9%	228	103	45.2%	5,535	2,918	52.7%
35 - 39	422	187	44.3%	140	76	54.3%	4,368	2,096	48.0%
40 - 44	296	139	47.0%	111	55	49.5%	3,277	1,465	44.7%
45 - 49	258	104	40.3%	88	44	50.0%	3,036	1,266	41.7%
50 - 54	161	60	37.3%	49	17	34.7%	2,539	935	36.8%
55 - 59	60	28	46.7%	28	5	N/A	1,326	431	32.5%
60 and over	14	3	N/A	10	2	N/A	755	191	25.3%
Total	2,556	1,152	45.1%	1,112	549	49.4%	31,515	15,464	49.1%

Three-Year Conviction Rates by Serious or Violent Offense and Fire Camp Participation

Serious/Violent Offense	Fire Camp Releases			Fire Camp Participants			No Fire Camp		
	Released	Convicted	Percent	Released	Convicted	Percent	Released	Convicted	Percent
Non-Serious/Non-Violent	1,558	772	49.6%	640	346	54.1%	20,307	10,481	51.6%
Serious	574	245	42.7%	211	90	42.7%	7,039	3,411	48.5%
Violent	424	135	31.8%	261	113	43.3%	4,169	1,572	37.7%
Total	2,556	1,152	45.1%	1,112	549	49.4%	31,515	15,464	49.1%

Three-Year Conviction Rates by Risk Score and Fire Camp Participation

Risk Score	Fire Camp Releases			Fire Camp Participants			No Fire Camp		
	Released	Convicted	Percent	Released	Convicted	Percent	Released	Convicted	Percent
Low	438	102	23.3%	174	45	25.9%	6,487	1,604	24.7%
Moderate	985	386	39.2%	408	188	46.1%	9,640	4,353	45.2%
High Drug	280	154	55.0%	105	67	63.8%	2,434	1,494	61.4%
High Property	437	267	61.1%	197	112	56.9%	4,281	2,604	60.8%
High Violence	416	243	58.4%	228	137	60.1%	8,671	5,409	62.4%
Missing	0	0	N/A	0	0	N/A	2	0	N/A
Total	2,556	1,152	45.1%	1,112	549	49.4%	31,515	15,464	49.1%

Three-Year Conviction Rates by Commitment Offense Category and Fire Camp Participation

Commitment Offense Category	Fire Camp Releases			Fire Camp Participants			No Fire Camp		
	Released	Convicted	Percent	Released	Convicted	Percent	Released	Convicted	Percent
Crimes Against Persons	709	264	37.2%	324	144	44.4%	10,836	4,830	44.6%
Property Crimes	860	444	51.6%	405	223	55.1%	8,236	4,467	54.2%
Drug Crimes	596	271	45.5%	248	116	46.8%	6,478	3,346	51.7%
Other Crimes	391	173	44.2%	135	66	48.9%	5,965	2,821	47.3%
Total	2,556	1,152	45.1%	1,112	549	49.4%	31,515	15,464	49.1%

Appendix F – Recidivism Rates for Fire Camp Eligible Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 without Fire Camp Experience

The below table shows one-, two- and three-year recidivism rates for the 2,557 fire camp releases and 767 offenders who were considered eligible for participation in a fire camp at the time of their release, but did not participate in a fire camp during their most recent stay at CDCR (fire camp eligible offenders).^{xxi} Please note the 767 fire camp eligible offenders are also included in the non-fire camp participant group of 35,515 offenders detailed in this report. Fire camp eligible offenders are isolated in this section to better understand their reoffending behaviors when compared to offenders with fire camp experience.

As shown in the below tables, fire camp releases had slightly lower recidivism rates than fire camp eligible offenders (without fire camp experience). The three-year arrest rate for fire camp releases (67.2 percent) was 6.5 percentage points lower than the rate of fire camp eligible offenders (73.7 percent). The three-year conviction rate for fire camp releases (45.1 percent) was 3.4 percentage points lower than fire camp eligible offenders (48.5 percent) and the three-year return-to-prison rate for fire camp releases (24.2 percent) was 1.6 percentage points lower than fire camp eligible offenders (25.8 percent).

While further research is needed to determine if the higher rates among fire camp eligible offenders is associated with the demographic composition of the group, fire camp experience, or a combination of multiple factors, these rates could suggest that participation in a fire camp positively influences recidivism rates, given each group was considered eligible and only one group (fire camp releases) had fire camp experience.

Arrest Rates

Release Type	Released	One-Year		Two-Year		Three-Year	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Fire Camp Release	2,556	1,146	44.8%	1,546	60.5%	1,718	67.2%
Fire Camp Eligible (No Fire Camp)	767	421	54.9%	510	66.5%	565	73.7%

Conviction Rates

Release Type	Released	One-Year		Two-Year		Three-Year	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Fire Camp Release	2,556	433	16.9%	875	34.2%	1,152	45.1%
Fire Camp Eligible (No Fire Camp)	767	158	20.6%	286	37.3%	372	48.5%

Return Rates

Release Type	Released	One-Year		Two-Year		Three-Year	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Fire Camp Release	2,557	141	5.5%	405	15.8%	619	24.2%
Fire Camp Eligible (No Fire Camp)	767	46	6.0%	120	15.6%	198	25.8%

Notes

ⁱ Fire camp participants can be returned to an institution prior to their release for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to: medical, dental, court and disciplinary reasons, or if an offender is paroling from an institution, rather than the fire camp.

ⁱⁱ A total of 4,022 offenders were dropped from the Fiscal Year 2014-15 release cohort because they were ineligible to participate in a fire camp. These offenders include 725 offenders sentenced to an indeterminate term (lifers), 3,284 offenders required to register under Penal Code 290 (sex registrants) and 13 offenders who were both lifers and sex registrants. During Fiscal Year 2014-15, a total of 39,399 offenders were released from CDCR, however, only 39,205 offenders had an automated Department of Justice rap sheet. Arrest and conviction data only include the 39,205 offenders with an automated rap sheet, while return-to-prison data include all 39,399 offenders released during the fiscal year. For more information, please see Section 6 Evaluation Design of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Fire camp participants can be returned to an institution prior to their release for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to: medical, dental, court and disciplinary reasons, or if an offender is paroling from an institution, rather than the fire camp. The reasons for which offenders were returned and released from an institution (e.g. disciplinary action, transfer or rules violation report) vs. a fire camp and the impact of the reason for the removal from the fire camp are beyond the scope of this analysis. Further research is needed to determine whether the reason for removal from a fire camp or the end of an offender's participation (e.g. disciplinary action, transfer or rules violation report) in a fire camp is associated with higher rates of recidivism.

^{iv} The California Static Risk Assessment (CSRA) is a tool used to calculate an offender's risk of conviction for a new offense after release from prison. Based on criminal history and demographics, including age, offenders are designated as having a low, moderate, or high risk of being convicted of a new offense.

^v For a detailed discussion regarding the associations between recidivism rates and offender demographics and characteristics, please see sections 4.2, 4.4 and 4.5 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 and sections 2.1.1, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.5 and 2.2.13 of the Appendix to the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 available through the following link:

<https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

^{vi} The three-year conviction rate is defined as "an individual convicted of a felony and incarcerated in a CDCR adult institution who was released to parole, discharged after being paroled, or directly discharged during Fiscal Year 2014-15 and subsequently convicted of a felony or misdemeanor offense within three years of their release date". More information regarding CDCR's definition of recidivism, supplemental measures of recidivism and methods may be found in Section 6 Evaluation Design of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 available through the following link: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

^{vii} Fire camp releases include offenders released from a fire camp during Fiscal Year 2014-15. Fire camp participants include those who participated in a fire camp at some point during their most recent stay at CDCR, but were not released from a fire camp. Non-fire camp participants were not released from a fire camp, nor did they participate in a fire camp at any point during their most recent stay at CDCR.

^{viii} The three-year conviction rate for offenders released in FY 2014-15 was slightly higher (46.5 percent) than prior release cohorts. The increase in the rate was largely attributed to the 4,111 offenders released under Proposition 47 (drug and property offenders) who were associated with higher rates of reoffending. For more information on the three-year conviction rate for FY 2014-15 releases and how it compares to prior release cohorts, as well as the rates of Proposition 47 offenders, please see sections 2.1, 2.4.2 and 4.2 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15. Additionally, the FY 2014-15 release cohort includes 4,022 offenders who were dropped from this examination due to their ineligibility to participate in fire camps. These offenders include 725 offenders sentenced to an indeterminate term (lifers), 3,284 offenders required to register under Penal Code 290 (sex registrants) and 13 offenders who were both lifers and sex registrants. Each of these groups are characterized by low recidivism rates. For more information regarding the recidivism rates of lifers, please see section 4.3 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 and available through the following link: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

^{ix} Lifers are associated with some of the lowest recidivism rates among CDCR releases (3.0 percent for lifers released in FY 2014-15) and are also excluded from participating in fire camps. Inclusion of offenders with lower rates or vice versa, may drive rates upward or downward, thereby making comparisons among groups difficult. For more information regarding subgroups of offenders, including lifers, please see sections 4.2 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 available through the following link:

<https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

^x For a detailed discussion regarding the associations between recidivism rates and offender demographics and characteristics, please see sections 4.2, 4.4 and 4.5 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 and sections 2.1.1, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.5 and 2.2.13 of the Appendix to the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 available through the following link:

<https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

^{xi} Other felony crimes could include offenses such as DUI, escape, possession of a weapon and other offenses (e.g. false imprisonment, stalking, street gang act). For a more detailed discussion, please see section 4.4 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 available through the following link:

<https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

^{xii} Time spent in a fire camp for fire camp releases only includes the time spent in the camp prior to their release and during their most recent stay at CDCR. Previous time spent in a fire camp was not included. For fire camp participants (who were not released from the fire camp), time spent in a fire camp includes all time spent in a fire camp during their most recent stay, whether that time was spent consecutively in a fire camp or not.

^{xiii} For a detailed discussion of age and recidivism, please see sections 2.2.1 and 5 of the Appendix to the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 available through the following link:

<https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

^{xiv} Further research is needed to affirm the idea that fire camp participation is most effective in reducing recidivism among younger age groups, as a number of complex factors contribute to recidivism rates. Analysis of fire camp data by age group for multiple release cohorts would be needed. Consideration of factors associated with older age groups (e.g. ability to obtain employment or utilize camp fire skills) versus younger age groups, and the impact of those factors on recidivism rates is also warranted.

^{xv} Further research is needed to determine whether the reason for removal from a fire camp or the end of an offender's participation (e.g. disciplinary action, transfer or rules violation report) in a fire camp is associated with higher rates of recidivism and accounts for some of the difference in recidivism rates observed between the two groups (fire camp releases and participants).

^{xvi} Fire camp participants can be returned to an institution prior to their release for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to: medical, dental, court and disciplinary reasons, or if an offender is paroling from an institution, rather than the fire camp. The reasons for which offenders were returned and released from an institution (e.g. disciplinary action, transfer or rules violation report) vs. a fire camp and the impact of the reason for the removal from the fire camp are beyond the scope of this analysis. Further research is needed to determine whether the reason for removal from a fire camp or the end of an offender's participation (e.g. disciplinary action, transfer or rules violation report) in a fire camp is associated with higher rates of recidivism.

^{xvii} For more information, please see Section 6 Evaluation Design of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

^{xviii} During Fiscal Year 2014-15, a total of 39,399 offenders were released from CDCR, however, only 39,205 offenders had an automated Department of Justice rap sheet. Arrest and conviction data only include the 39,205 offenders with an automated rap sheet, while return-to-prison data include all 39,399 offenders released during the fiscal year. For more information, please see Section 6 Evaluation Design of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

^{xix} The reasons for which offenders were returned and released from an institution (e.g. disciplinary action, transfer or rules violation report) vs. a fire camp and the impact of the reason for the removal from the fire camp are beyond the scope of this analysis. Further research is needed to determine whether the reason for removal from a fire camp or the end of an offender's participation (e.g. disciplinary action, transfer or rules violation report) in a fire camp is associated with higher rates of recidivism.

^{xx} For more information regarding the recidivism rates of lifers, please see section 4.3 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2014-15 and available through the following link:

<https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

^{xxi} Fire camp eligibility is based upon an administrative determinant obtained from classification forms (intake and annual review) that were derived from the Strategic Offender Management System (SOMS). Offenders considered “fire camp eligible” had an administrative determinant indicating they were fire camp eligible at the time of their release, although they did not participate in a fire camp during their most recent stay at CDCR. Each of the fire camp eligible inmates is included in the non-fire camp participant group for the purposes of this report. In 2014, SOMS became CDCR’s system of record regarding administrative determinates. The transition to SOMS overlaps with the release dates of the offenders included in this analysis, and therefore, there may be data limitations in the determination of camp eligibility.