



California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

# RECIDIVISM RATES FOR FIRE CAMP PARTICIPANTS RELEASED FROM THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION IN FISCAL YEAR 2017-18

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## Recidivism Rates for Fire Camp Participants Released from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in Fiscal Year 2017-18

### Summary

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) uses three measures of recidivism with the three-year conviction rate serving as the primary measure. The three-year arrest and return-to-prison rates serve as supplemental measures of recidivism.<sup>i</sup> This briefing supplements the Statewide Recidivism Report for Offenders Released from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017-18. Detailed information regarding the evaluation design, methodology and data limitations may be found in the statewide report.<sup>ii</sup>

The three-year conviction rate for offenders who were released from a fire camp is 45.1 percent, which is slightly higher than the rate for offenders with some fire camp experience (43.7 percent) and slightly lower than the rate for offenders with no fire camp experience (47.8 percent). Some of the difference in recidivism rates is attributed to the demographics and characteristics associated with each group of offenders.<sup>iii</sup>

The duration of participation in a fire camp appears to influence recidivism rates, with those spending more time in fire camps recidivating at lower rates than those spending less time. Offenders who spent a year or longer in a fire camp have the best recidivism outcomes (31.6 percent for participants, 36.0 percent for fire camp releases). 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 have lower rates than young offenders without fire camp experience.

Offenders released from fire camps have 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 is 2.2 percentage points lower (45.1 percent) than the rate for fire camp eligible offenders who did not participate in camps (47.3 percent). Although this difference could suggest that participation in a fire camp positively influences recidivism rates, further research is needed to determine if the higher rates among fire camp eligible offenders are associated with the demographic composition of the group, fire camp experience, or a combination of multiple factors.

The fire camp release group is comprised of the largest group of releases (3,205 offenders) since reporting began with the FY 2014-15 release cohort. As this group continues to grow and diversify, changes in previously observed patterns of reoffending are expected.

### Background

Of the 35,447 offenders released from CDCR in FY 2017-18, approximately nine percent of the release cohort (3,205 offenders) were released from a fire camp (fire camp releases). An additional four percent (1,495 offenders) had some fire camp participation during their most recent stay at CDCR, but were released from an adult institution instead of a fire camp (fire camp participants).<sup>iv</sup> Approximately 75 percent of offenders (26,433 offenders) released during FY 2017-18 did not participate in a fire camp (non-fire camp participants) and 4,314 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.<sup>v</sup>

Because fire camp releases are released from different correctional settings and the reason for the end of a fire camp participant's tenure in a fire camp is not accounted for when calculating recidivism rates, these two groups are treated separately.<sup>vi</sup> The intent of this report is to examine differences in recidivism rates among offenders with varying levels of experience in a fire camp to better understand how fire camps influence post-release outcomes. Fire camp releases have 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.

### Profile of Fire Camp Releases and Participants

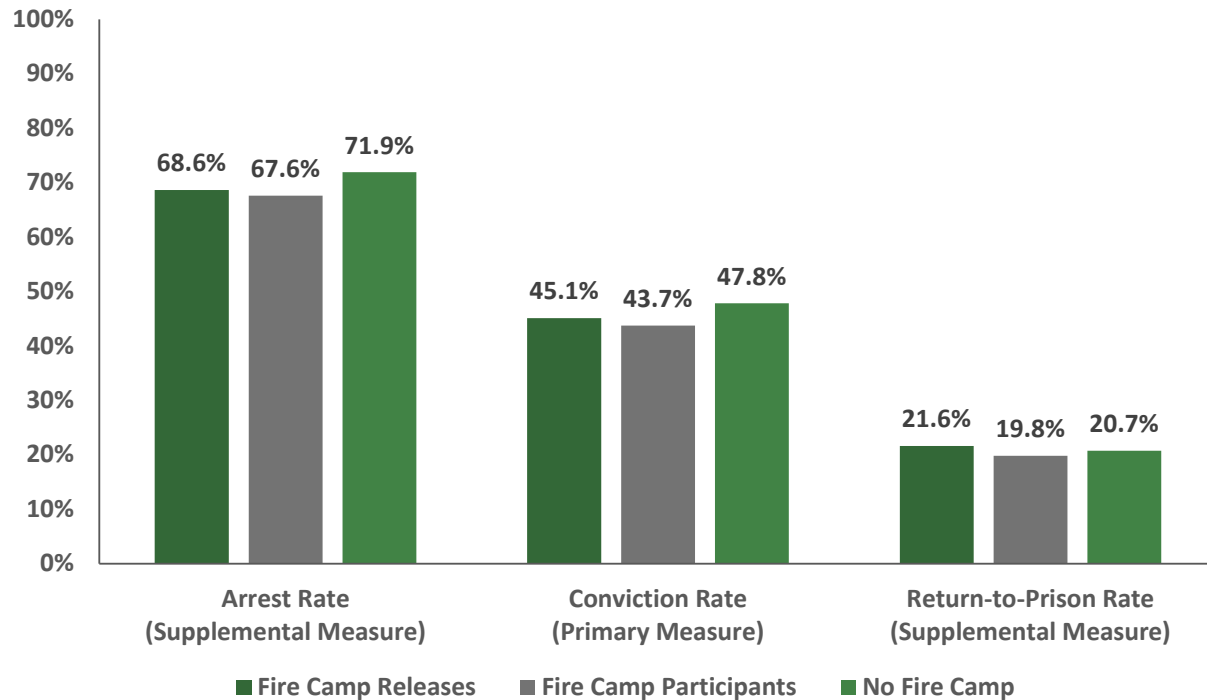
The demographics and characteristics of each fire camp group are presented in Appendix A. Fire camp releases and participants are more likely to be released to parole supervision than Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS). Compared to non-fire camp participants, fire camp releases and participants have a slightly lower percentage of offenders with a low risk of reoffending according to the California Static Risk Assessment (CSRA).<sup>vii</sup> Although a considerable percentage of each group was originally committed for crimes against persons, fire camp releases and participants have higher percentages of offenders committed to CDCR for drug and property crimes. The fire camp release group has the highest percentage of offenders committed for a property crime. Higher percentages of fire camp releases and participants are sentenced as second strikers when compared to non-fire camp participants who are more likely sentenced to a determinate term.<sup>viii</sup>

Some of the characteristics of fire camp releases and participants are historically associated with higher recidivism rates: younger offenders who commit less serious and 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.<sup>ix</sup> While many complex factors contribute to patterns of reoffending, higher rates of reoffending among fire camp releases could be expected due to the prevalence of characteristics that are highly associated with recidivism (Appendix A).

### Recidivism Rates (Arrests, Convictions and Returns to Prison)

The three-year conviction rate for fire camp releases is 45.1 percent, which is slightly higher than the rate for fire camp participants who released from an adult institution (43.7 percent) and slightly lower than the rate for offenders with no fire camp experience (47.8 percent).<sup>x</sup> The recidivism rate for all 35,447 offenders released during the same period, regardless of participation in a fire camp, is 44.6 percent, slightly lower than the recidivism rate of fire camp releases.<sup>xi</sup> As shown in Figure 1, arrest rates followed a similar pattern: the three-year arrest rate for fire camp releases is 68.6 percent, the rate for fire camp participants is 67.6 percent and the rate for non-fire camp participants is 71.9 percent. The three-year return-to-prison rate is 21.6 percent for fire camp releases, 19.8 percent for fire camp participants and 20.7 percent for offenders without fire camp experience (Appendix B).

*Figure 1. Three-Year Arrest, Conviction, and Return-to-Prison Rates for Fire Camp Releases, Fire Camp Participants and Non-Fire Camp Participants Released from CDCR During Fiscal Year 2017-18*



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 demographic composition. For example, the non-fire camp group is large (approximately 75 percent of all releases in FY 2017-18) and contains many offenders associated with low recidivism rates (e.g., offenders serving longer prison terms for crimes against persons), which may influence their overall recidivism rate downward.<sup>xii</sup> Conversely, the fire camp release and fire camp participant groups have high numbers of young property and drug offenders, which may influence their overall recidivism rate upward. Further, fire camp releases and participants are smaller subgroups than non-fire camp releases, and nuances associated with individual cases have a greater impact on rates.<sup>xiii</sup>

## Type of Post-Release Conviction for Fire Camp Releases

Of the 3,205 offenders released from a fire camp in FY 2017-18, 45.1 percent or 1,446 offenders were convicted within three years of their release. Less than half (48.2 percent) of the convictions are felony convictions and 51.8 percent are misdemeanor convictions. As shown in the Table 1, nearly one quarter (22.5 percent) of all convictions are for misdemeanor drug/alcohol crimes, followed by felony crimes against persons (14.2 percent) and felony property crimes (13.7 percent).<sup>xiv</sup>

*Table 1. Type of Conviction for the 1,446 Fire Camp Releases Convicted During the Three-Year Follow-Up Period*

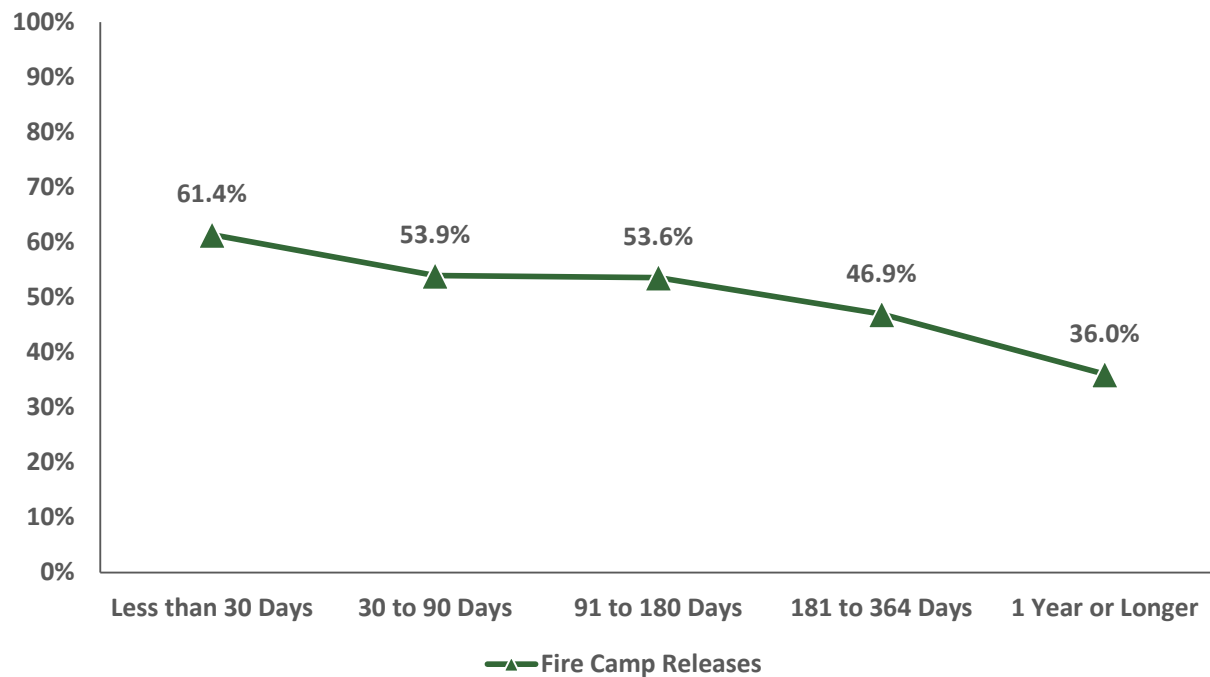
Type of Conviction for Fire Camp Releases	Number	Percent
<b>All Felonies</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>48.2%</b>
Felony Crimes Against Persons	205	14.2%
Felony Property Crimes	198	13.7%
Felony Other Crimes	194	13.4%
Felony Drug/Alcohol Crimes	100	6.9%
<b>All Misdemeanors</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>51.8%</b>
Misdemeanor Drug/Alcohol Crimes	326	22.5%
Misdemeanor Crimes Against Persons	157	10.9%
Misdemeanor Property Crimes	157	10.9%
Misdemeanor Other Crimes	109	7.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,446</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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 slightly higher percentage of fire camp releases are convicted for felony drug/alcohol crimes (Appendix C). Additionally, fire camp releases and participants in this cohort are slightly less likely to be convicted of felony crimes against persons than non-fire camp participants.

## Time Spent in a Fire Camp and Recidivism

The amount of time spent in a fire camp appears to influence recidivism rates: those with longer stays have substantially lower rates than offenders with shorter stays.<sup>xv</sup> The recidivism rate for fire camp releases who spent less than 30 days in a fire camp was 61.4 percent, which is 25.4 percentage points higher than the rate for those who spent over a year (36.0 percent).

*Figure 2. Three-Year Conviction Rate for Fire Camp Releases by Time Spent in a Fire Camp*



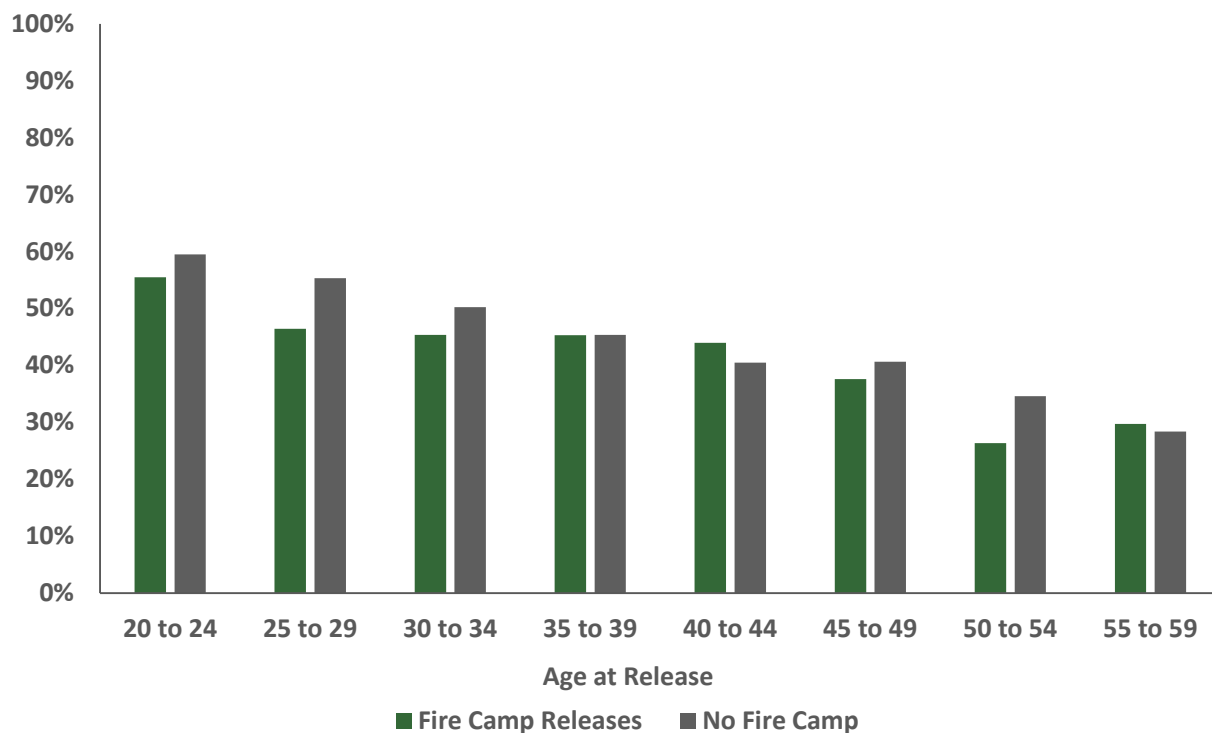
The decrease in the rate based on time spent in a fire camp is consistent for fire camp participants as well. The three-year conviction rate for fire camp participants with less than one year in a fire camp is 47.8 percent and the rate for those who stayed one year or longer is 31.6 percent, a difference of 16.2 percentage points (Appendix D). These rates indicate the best outcomes tend to occur when an offender participates in a fire camp for one year or longer.

### Age, Fire Camp Participation and Recidivism

Age is a strong predictor of recidivism among younger offenders, particularly those committed to CDCR for property and drug crimes who are often 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 a heavily weighted factor in determining an offender's risk of recidivism through the CSRA.<sup>xvi</sup> A review of the recidivism rates by age group for all 35,447 offenders released from CDCR during FY 2017-18 affirms age as a predictor of recidivism: as the age group of the offenders increases, the rate consistently decreases.<sup>xvii</sup> This same general pattern holds true when looking at recidivism rates for all three levels of fire camp participation (Appendix E).

A notable exception to the age and recidivism relationship exists among fire camp releases. While younger offenders generally have higher rates than older offenders, younger offenders released from fire camps have noticeably lower rates than offenders with no fire camp experience within the same age group (Figure 3). Further, the difference in recidivism rates within age groups is most pronounced among younger age groups (e.g., offenders ages 20 to 34), and as age increases the differences are not as evident. In some cases, fire camp releases in older age groups have 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 at reducing recidivism for younger offenders, which are typically some of the highest recidivating groups of offenders.<sup>xviii</sup>

*Figure 3. 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 most serious 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 with historical statewide cohorts: non-serious and non-violent property and drug offenders tend to have higher recidivism rates than serious or violent offenders that commit crimes against persons. Offenders with violent offenses have substantially lower rates than offenders with serious or non-serious/non-violent offenses.

Fire camp releases and participants in the FY 2017-18 release cohort generally have lower conviction rates than non-fire camp participants when comparing rates by serious/violent offense and commitment offense category. The three-year conviction rate for fire camp releases with a violent offense is lower than fire camp participants and non-fire camp participants. Fire camp participants with a serious offense or a non-serious/non-violent offense have a lower rate than fire camp releases and non-fire camp participants.

Fire camp releases and participants who are committed for crimes against persons, property, drug, or other crimes have lower recidivism rates when compared to non-fire camp participants. Offenders committed for property crimes have the highest three-year conviction rate among each commitment offense category for all three groups of fire camp participation. Fire camp releases also have the highest percentage of offenders committed for property crimes, which likely influences their overall rate upward.

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 participants recidivated at lower rates than fire camp releases (Appendices A and B).<sup>xix</sup> The fire camp release group has the highest percentage of offenders committed for property crimes, who are typically associated with higher rates of reoffending.<sup>xx</sup> Despite these characteristics, both groups (fire camp releases and participants) have lower three-year conviction rates than those without fire camp experience.

Appendix A – Demographics and Characteristics of Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 by Fire Camp Participation

Demographics and Characteristics	Fire Camp Releases		Fire Camp Participants		No Fire Camp	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Total</b>	3,205	100.0%	1,495	100.0%	26,433	100.0%
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	2,978	92.9%	1,357	90.8%	24,303	91.9%
Female	227	7.1%	138	9.2%	2,130	8.1%
<b>Age at Release</b>						
18 and 19	15	0.5%	5	0.3%	186	0.7%
20 to 24	463	14.4%	274	18.3%	3,609	13.7%
25 to 29	760	23.7%	367	24.5%	5,610	21.2%
30 to 34	648	20.2%	302	20.2%	4,973	18.8%
35 to 39	541	16.9%	238	15.9%	4,231	16.0%
40 to 44	316	9.9%	134	9.0%	2,649	10.0%
45 to 49	218	6.8%	80	5.4%	2,031	7.7%
50 to 54	148	4.6%	54	3.6%	1,552	5.9%
55 to 59	74	2.3%	28	1.9%	983	3.7%
60 and over	22	0.7%	13	0.9%	609	2.3%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
American Indian/Alaskan Native	32	1.0%	14	0.9%	269	1.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	51	1.6%	28	1.9%	383	1.4%
Black/African American	695	21.7%	356	23.8%	6,339	24.0%
Hispanic/Latino	1,393	43.5%	679	45.4%	12,179	46.1%
White	935	29.2%	371	24.8%	6,453	24.4%
Other	99	3.1%	47	3.1%	810	3.1%
<b>Commitment Offense Category</b>						
Crimes Against Persons	1,336	41.7%	650	43.5%	12,182	46.1%
Property Crimes	909	28.4%	383	25.6%	5,732	21.7%
Drug Crimes	321	10.0%	198	13.2%	2,268	8.6%
Other Crimes	639	19.9%	264	17.7%	6,251	23.6%

Appendix A – Demographics and Characteristics of Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 by Fire Camp Participation (continued)

Demographics and Characteristics	Fire Camp Releases		Fire Camp Participants		No Fire Camp	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Sentence Type</b>						
Determinate Term	1,887	58.9%	922	61.7%	19,699	74.5%
Second Strikers	1,313	41.0%	570	38.1%	6,716	25.4%
Resentenced to Misdemeanor	5	0.2%	3	0.2%	18	0.1%
<b>Type of Post-Release Supervision</b>						
Parole	1,610	50.2%	824	55.1%	11,829	44.8%
Post-Release Community Supervision	1,595	49.8%	670	44.8%	14,587	55.2%
Directly Discharged	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	17	0.1%
<b>Serious/Violent Offenders</b>						
Serious	688	21.5%	284	19.0%	6,508	24.6%
Violent	923	28.8%	537	35.9%	5,269	19.9%
Non-Serious/Non-Violent	1,594	49.7%	674	45.1%	14,656	55.4%
<b>CSRA Risk Score</b>						
Low	631	19.7%	322	21.5%	6,310	23.9%
Moderate	1,129	35.2%	546	36.5%	7,626	28.9%
High Drug	211	6.6%	95	6.4%	1,458	5.5%
High Property	440	13.7%	210	14.0%	3,091	11.7%
High Violent	794	24.8%	322	21.5%	7,948	30.1%

Appendix B – Recidivism Rates for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 by Fire  
Camp Participation

*Arrest Rates*

Release Type	Number Released	One-Year		Two-Year		Three-Year	
		Number Arrested	Arrest Rate	Number Arrested	Arrest Rate	Number Arrested	Arrest Rate
Fire Camp Releases	3,205	1,604	50.0%	2,026	63.2%	2,200	68.6%
Fire Camp Participants	1,495	760	50.8%	936	62.6%	1,011	67.6%
No Fire Camp	26,433	14,614	55.3%	17,796	67.3%	19,011	71.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,133</b>	<b>16,978</b>	<b>54.5%</b>	<b>20,758</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>22,222</b>	<b>71.4%</b>

*Conviction Rates*

Release Type	Number Released	One-Year		Two-Year		Three-Year	
		Number Convicted	Conviction Rate	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate
Fire Camp Releases	3,205	683	21.3%	1,228	38.3%	1,446	45.1%
Fire Camp Participants	1,495	317	21.2%	563	37.7%	654	43.7%
No Fire Camp	26,433	6,259	23.7%	10,835	41.0%	12,636	47.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,133</b>	<b>7,259</b>	<b>23.3%</b>	<b>12,626</b>	<b>40.6%</b>	<b>14,736</b>	<b>47.3%</b>

*Return-to-Prison Rates*

Release Type	Number Released	One-Year		Two-Year		Three-Year	
		Number Returned	Return Rate	Number Returned	Return Rate	Number Returned	Return Rate
Fire Camp Releases	3,216	229	7.1%	552	17.2%	695	21.6%
Fire Camp Participants	1,504	102	6.8%	247	16.4%	298	19.8%
No Fire Camp	26,711	1,780	6.7%	4,465	16.7%	5,541	20.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,431</b>	<b>2,111</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>5,264</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>6,534</b>	<b>20.8%</b>

Appendix C – Type of Conviction for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 by Fire Camp Participation

*Type of Conviction for All Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 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
<b>No Convictions</b>	<b>1,759</b>	<b>54.9%</b>	<b>841</b>	<b>56.3%</b>	<b>13,797</b>	<b>52.2%</b>
<b>All Felonies</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>20.9%</b>	<b>5,796</b>	<b>21.9%</b>
Felony Crimes Against Persons	205	6.4%	95	6.4%	1,885	7.1%
Felony Property Crimes	198	6.2%	95	6.4%	1,590	6.0%
Felony Other Crimes	194	6.1%	87	5.8%	1,713	6.5%
Felony Drug/Alcohol Crimes	100	3.1%	35	2.3%	608	2.3%
<b>All Misdemeanors</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>23.4%</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>22.9%</b>	<b>6,840</b>	<b>25.9%</b>
Misdemeanor Drug/Alcohol Crimes	326	10.2%	133	8.9%	2,806	10.6%
Misdemeanor Crimes Against Persons	157	4.9%	90	6.0%	1,699	6.4%
Misdemeanor Property Crimes	157	4.9%	62	4.1%	1,373	5.2%
Misdemeanor Other Crimes	109	3.4%	57	3.8%	962	3.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,205</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,495</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>26,433</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Type of Conviction for the 14,736 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
<b>All Felonies</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>48.2%</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>47.7%</b>	<b>5,796</b>	<b>45.9%</b>
Felony Crimes Against Persons	205	14.2%	95	14.5%	1,885	14.9%
Felony Property Crimes	198	13.7%	95	14.5%	1,590	12.6%
Felony Other Crimes	194	13.4%	87	13.3%	1,713	13.6%
Felony Drug/Alcohol Crimes	100	6.9%	35	5.4%	608	4.8%
<b>All Misdemeanors</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>51.8%</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>52.3%</b>	<b>6,840</b>	<b>54.1%</b>
Misdemeanor Drug/Alcohol Crimes	326	22.5%	133	20.3%	2,806	22.2%
Misdemeanor Crimes Against Persons	157	10.9%	90	13.8%	1,699	13.4%
Misdemeanor Property Crimes	157	10.9%	62	9.5%	1,373	10.9%
Misdemeanor Other Crimes	109	7.5%	57	8.7%	962	7.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,446</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>12,636</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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		
	Number Released	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate	Number Released	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate
Less than 30 Days	44	27	61.4%	110	52	47.3%
30 to 90 Days	369	199	53.9%	271	125	46.1%
91 to 180 Days	644	345	53.6%	360	175	48.6%
181 to 364 Days	929	436	46.9%	381	184	48.3%
1 Year or Longer	1,219	439	36.0%	373	118	31.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,205</b>	<b>1,446</b>	<b>45.1%</b>	<b>1,495</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>43.7%</b>

Appendix E – Recidivism Rates for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 by Fire Camp Participation and Select Demographics and Characteristics

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

Age at Release	Fire Camp Releases			Fire Camp Participants			No Fire Camp		
	Number Released	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate	Number Released	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate	Number Released	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate
18 and 19	15	10	N/A	5	2	N/A	186	128	68.8%
20 to 24	463	257	55.5%	274	146	53.3%	3,609	2,148	59.5%
25 to 29	760	353	46.4%	367	162	44.1%	5,610	3,104	55.3%
30 to 34	648	294	45.4%	302	140	46.4%	4,973	2,498	50.2%
35 to 39	541	245	45.3%	238	91	38.2%	4,231	1,919	45.4%
40 to 44	316	139	44.0%	134	48	35.8%	2,649	1,073	40.5%
45 to 49	218	82	37.6%	80	38	47.5%	2,031	826	40.7%
50 to 54	148	39	26.4%	54	18	33.3%	1,552	537	34.6%
55 to 59	74	22	29.7%	28	6	N/A	983	279	28.4%
60 and over	22	5	N/A	13	3	N/A	609	124	20.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,205</b>	<b>1,446</b>	<b>45.1%</b>	<b>1,495</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>43.7%</b>	<b>26,433</b>	<b>12,636</b>	<b>47.8%</b>

*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		
	Number Released	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate	Number Released	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate	Number Released	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate
Serious	688	320	46.5%	284	124	43.7%	6,508	3,130	48.1%
Violent	923	295	32.0%	537	198	36.9%	5,269	1,810	34.4%
Non-Serious/Non-Violent	1,594	831	52.1%	674	332	49.3%	14,656	7,696	52.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,205</b>	<b>1,446</b>	<b>45.1%</b>	<b>1,495</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>43.7%</b>	<b>26,433</b>	<b>12,636</b>	<b>47.8%</b>

Supplemental Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18:  
Fire Camp Participants

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

CSRA Risk Score	Fire Camp Releases			Fire Camp Participants			No Fire Camp		
	Number Released	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate	Number Released	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate	Number Released	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate
Low	631	153	24.2%	322	52	16.1%	6,310	1,539	24.4%
Moderate	1,129	463	41.0%	546	227	41.6%	7,626	3,404	44.6%
High Drug	211	112	53.1%	95	54	56.8%	1,458	864	59.3%
High Property	440	254	57.7%	210	127	60.5%	3,091	1,972	63.8%
High Violent	794	464	58.4%	322	194	60.2%	7,948	4,857	61.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,205</b>	<b>1,446</b>	<b>45.1%</b>	<b>1,495</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>43.7%</b>	<b>26,433</b>	<b>12,636</b>	<b>47.8%</b>

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

Commitment Offense Category	Fire Camp Releases			Fire Camp Participants			No Fire Camp		
	Number Released	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate	Number Released	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate	Number Released	Number Convicted	Conviction Rate
Crimes Against Persons	1,336	549	41.1%	650	261	40.2%	12,182	5,251	43.1%
Property Crimes	909	475	52.3%	383	193	50.4%	5,732	3,281	57.2%
Drug Crimes	321	127	39.6%	198	76	38.4%	2,268	1,049	46.3%
Other Crimes	639	295	46.2%	264	124	47.0%	6,251	3,055	48.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,205</b>	<b>1,446</b>	<b>45.1%</b>	<b>1,495</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>43.7%</b>	<b>26,433</b>	<b>12,636</b>	<b>47.8%</b>



## Appendix F – Recidivism Rates for Fire Camp Eligible Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 without Fire Camp Experience

The below table shows one-, two- and three-year recidivism rates for the 3,205 fire camp releases and 922 offenders who are 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).<sup>xxi</sup> Please note the 922 fire camp eligible offenders are also included in the non-fire camp participant group of 26,433 offenders detailed in this report. Fire camp eligible offenders are isolated in this section to better understand their reoffending patterns when compared to offenders with fire camp experience.

As shown in the below tables, fire camp releases have slightly lower recidivism rates than fire camp eligible offenders (without fire camp experience). The three-year arrest rate for fire camp releases (68.6 percent) is 5.7 percentage points lower than the rate of fire camp eligible offenders (74.3 percent) and the three-year conviction rate for fire camp releases (45.1 percent) is 2.2 percentage points lower than fire camp eligible offenders (47.3 percent). However, the three-year return-to-prison rate for fire camp releases (21.6 percent) is 1.9 percentage points higher than fire camp eligible offenders (19.7 percent).

Further research is needed to determine if the higher rates among fire camp eligible offenders are associated with the demographic composition of the group, fire camp experience, or a combination of multiple factors. Given each group was considered eligible and only one group (fire camp releases) have fire camp experience, these rates could suggest those with fire camp experience have slightly better post-release recidivism rates than those who are eligible and do not participate.

### Arrest Rates

Release Type	Released	One-Year		Two-Year		Three-Year	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Fire Camp Releases	3,205	1,604	50.0%	2,026	63.2%	2,200	68.6%
Fire Camp Eligible (No Fire Camp)	922	527	57.2%	644	69.8%	685	74.3%

### Conviction Rates

Release Type	Released	One-Year		Two-Year		Three-Year	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Fire Camp Releases	3,205	683	21.3%	1,228	38.3%	1,446	45.1%
Fire Camp Eligible (No Fire Camp)	922	231	25.1%	372	40.3%	436	47.3%

### Return-to-Prison Rates

Release Type	Released	One-Year		Two-Year		Three-Year	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Fire Camp Releases	3,216	229	7.1%	552	17.2%	695	21.6%
Fire Camp Eligible (No Fire Camp)	933	73	7.8%	152	16.3%	184	19.7%

## 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 2017-18”. Development of one-, two-, and three-year recidivism rates follow the methods detailed in Appendix G Evaluation Design of the report.<sup>xxii</sup> Similarly, arrest and conviction data only include offenders with a Department of Justice (DOJ) automated Record of Arrest and Prosecution (RAP) sheet, while return-to-prison data include all offenders released from CDCR during FY 2017-18.<sup>xxiii</sup>

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 is not accounted for when calculating recidivism rates, these two groups are 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.<sup>xxiv</sup> 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 is 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) are 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.<sup>xxv</sup>

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 recidivism 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.

## Notes

<sup>i</sup> 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 2017-18 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 Appendix G: Evaluation Design of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 available through the following link: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

<sup>ii</sup> Please see Appendix G for detailed information regarding the evaluation design, methodology and limitations with regards to offenders released from CDCR during FY 2017-18: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

<sup>iii</sup> For a detailed discussion regarding the associations between recidivism rates and offender demographics and characteristics, please see section 5.2 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 available through the following link: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

<sup>iv</sup> 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.

<sup>v</sup> A total of 4,314 offenders were dropped from the Fiscal Year 2017-18 release cohort because they were ineligible to participate in a fire camp. These offenders include 728 offenders sentenced to an indeterminate term (lifers), 3,551 offenders required to register under Penal Code 290 (sex registrants) and 35 offenders who were both lifers and sex registrants. During Fiscal Year 2017-18, a total of 35,821 offenders were released from CDCR, however, only 35,447 offenders had an automated Department of Justice RAP sheet. Arrest and conviction data only include those offenders with an automated rap sheet, while return-to-prison data include all offenders released during the fiscal year. For more information, please see Appendix G: Evaluation Design of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

<sup>vi</sup> 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 are returned and released from an institution (e.g., disciplinary action, transfer or rules violation report) versus 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.

<sup>vii</sup> 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.

<sup>viii</sup> For more information regarding definitions and terms, please see Appendix H: Definition of Terms of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 available through the following link: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

<sup>ix</sup> Although the fire camp release and participant groups have large proportions of offenders who are committed for non-serious/non-violent offenses, a larger proportion of the fire camp participant group was comprised of offenders with a violent offense (35.9 percent) when compared to fire camp releases (28.8 percent) and non-fire camp participants (19.9 percent). Those with a violent offense have lower rates of recidivism than those with a non-serious/non-violent offense and the high proportion of offenders with a violent offense may have influenced the overall rate for fire camp participants downward (43.7 percent). For a detailed discussion regarding the associations between recidivism rates and offender demographics and characteristics, please see section 5.2 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 available through the following link: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

<sup>x</sup> Fire camp releases include offenders released from a fire camp during Fiscal Year 2017-18. 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.

<sup>xi</sup> The three-year conviction rate for offenders released in FY 2017-18 is slightly lower (44.6 percent) than prior release cohorts. The decrease in the rate between the last two fiscal years is attributed to several factors, including a decrease in the three-year conviction rate among offenders released to PRCS, who comprise over half of the release cohort. For more information on the three-year conviction rate for FY 2017-18 releases and how it compares to prior release cohorts, please see section 3 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18. Additionally, the FY 2017-18 release cohort includes 4,314 offenders who were excluded from this report due to their ineligibility to participate in fire camps. These offenders include 728 offenders sentenced to an indeterminate term (lifers), 3,551 offenders required to register under Penal Code 290 (sex registrants) and 35 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 these offenders, please see Sentence Type and Sex Registration Requirement under section 5.2 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 available through the following link: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

<sup>xii</sup> Lifers are associated with some of the lowest recidivism rates among CDCR releases (1.9 percent for lifers released in FY 2017-18) and are not eligible to participate in fire camps. Inclusion of offenders with lower rates or vice versa may drive rates upward or downward, thereby making comparisons between groups more difficult. Additionally, the non-fire camp participant group also has higher proportions of offenders with a low CSRA score than fire camp releases and participants, which also contribute to lower rates of reoffending. For more information regarding subgroups of offenders, including lifers, please see Sentence Type under section 5.2 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 available through the following link: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

<sup>xiii</sup> The fire camp participant group has a larger proportion of offenders with a violent offense when compared to fire camp releases and non-fire camp participants, which may have influenced their three-year conviction rate downward. For a detailed discussion regarding the associations between recidivism rates and offender demographics and characteristics, please see section 5.2 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 available through the following link: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

<sup>xiv</sup> 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 Commitment Offense Category under section 5.2 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 available through the following link: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

<sup>xv</sup> 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.

<sup>xvi</sup> For more information, please see Risk Score under section 5.2 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

<sup>xvii</sup> For a detailed discussion of age and recidivism, please see sections 7.1.1 and 7.5 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2015-16: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

<sup>xviii</sup> 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.

<sup>xix</sup> The fire camp participant group has a larger proportion of offenders with a violent offense when compared to fire camp releases and non-fire camp participants, which may have influenced their three-year conviction rate downward. For a detailed discussion regarding the associations between recidivism rates and offender demographics and characteristics, please see section 5.2 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 available through the following link: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

<sup>xx</sup> 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 are 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 in a fire camp is associated with higher rates of recidivism.

<sup>xxi</sup> Fire camp eligibility is based upon an administrative determinant obtained from classification forms (intake and annual review) that are derived from the Strategic Offender Management System (SOMS). Offenders considered "fire camp eligible" had an administrative determinant indicating they are 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.

<sup>xxii</sup> For more information, please see Appendix G: Evaluation Design of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

<sup>xxiii</sup> During Fiscal Year 2017-18, a total of 35,821 offenders were released from CDCR, however, only 35,447 offenders had an automated Department of Justice RAP sheet. Arrest and conviction data only include offenders with an automated rap sheet, while return-to-prison data include all offenders released during the fiscal year. For more information, please see Appendix G: Evaluation Design of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>

<sup>xxiv</sup> The reasons for which offenders are 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 in a fire camp is associated with higher rates of recidivism.

<sup>xxv</sup> For more information regarding the recidivism rates of lifers, please see Sentence Type under section 5.2 of the Recidivism Report for Offenders Released in Fiscal Year 2017-18 available through the following link: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/research/offender-outcomes-characteristics/offender-recidivism/>



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