

Factors related to unlawful walkaways from minimum security institutions (R-23, 1992)

This report is the first in a series on walkaways and provides a descriptive profile of offenders who unlawfully depart from minimum security institutions. Data were collected on all offenders who had walked away from federal minimum security institutions in the Ontario region (Bath, Beaver Creek, Frontenac, Pittsburg) over a 15-month period (January 1, 1990 to April 15, 1991). There were 70 offenders who had unlawfully departed during this period.

The results of the study revealed that unlawful departures from minimum security facilities were most likely to occur at institutions with higher admission rates, during the spring and summer months and within several months of minimum security placement. Moreover, inmates who walked away were more often under 30 years of age (75.4%), Caucasian (97.1%), single (58.6%), serving sentences of under four years (71.5%) and had a major offence that was property-related (58.6%).

An important feature of the walkaway study was that it sought to capture inmates' perceptions of their minimum security placement and the circumstances surrounding their unlawful departures. A systematic review of case file documentation and a descriptive profile of motivating circumstances strongly suggest this group fits the higher risk and multineed category since both "static" and "dynamic" or situational factors are present that are amenable to a more specialized offender risk/needs scale.