

Security classification using the Custody Rating Scale (R-67, 1998)

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The purpose of this study is to address four main issues:

1. Is the security classification provided by the Custody Rating Scale (CRS) associated with offenders' institutional and release behaviour?
2. What percentage of inmates has a Custody Rating Scale completed and available for reference in the Offender Management System (OMS), and is the percentage increasing?
3. How consistently does the inmate security level match the institutional security level?
4. Are there differences in inmate security classification levels across regions, ethnic groups and gender?

The results presented in the report provide support for the use of Custody Rating Scale as a means of classifying offenders by security level. The data showed that there was a clear relationship between institutional and release performance and the rating received from the CRS. Comparisons between 1995 and 1997 showed increased use of the CRS and a trend towards fewer overrides, although this was not consistent for all regions.

The CRS provides an objective and valid method of assessing the security classification needs of federal offenders. The available evidence indicates a strong relationship between CRS ratings and a number of indices of adjustment and risk and that it can play a useful role in the management of offenders and in meeting the objectives set out in the CCRA. The CRS has specific implications for promoting the placement of offenders to the least restrictive form of incarceration while ensuring consistent, accurate placement of offenders that does not compromise the safety of the public.

The CRS provides information for the initial placement decision. Work is continuing on the development of a classification tool that will provide for systematic re-evaluation of the security level requirements of offenders. This tool will take account of the offenders' participation in treatment and work programs, general institutional behaviour and other factors that are related to positive correctional results. ■