

_____ **Research Report** _____

**Waivers, Postponements and
Withdrawals of Parole Reviews:
Examining the Characteristics of
High Volume Users**

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**Waivers, Postponements, and Withdrawals of Parole Reviews:
Examining the Characteristics of High Volume Users**

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Executive Summary

One of the challenges confronting both the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC or the Service) and the National Parole Board (NPB or the Board) is the large number of offenders who waive, postpone, or withdraw their reviews for day or full parole.¹ These delays and cancellations, especially if made at the last moment, have time and resource implications for both the Board and the Service. A research report released in 2009 examined the characteristics of federal offenders who waived, postponed, and withdrew their application to appear before the NPB for a parole review (Cabana, Beauchamp, Emeno, & Bottos, 2009). One finding of particular interest suggested that a relatively small group of offenders—less than ten percent of the total number of offenders who had delayed or cancelled their parole hearings—accounted for almost one-quarter of all delays and cancellations. The purpose of this follow-up study was to further examine the group of offenders with multiple delays and cancellations so as to determine whether there were characteristics specific to this group that might help us better understand high volume users.

In order to conduct this study information was collected for all offenders who had at least one waiver, postponement or withdrawal from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2009. During that time period, a total of 8,604 offenders accounted for 14,563 waivers, postponements or withdrawals. Almost two-thirds (63.9%) of these offenders had only one decision, one-fifth (20.8%) had two decisions, and 6.7% had three decisions. There was, however, a group of 735 offenders who had a minimum of four decisions that we labelled “high volume users.” Although this group only represented 8.5% of the entire population of offenders who had a waiver, postponement, or withdrawal, they accounted for more than one-quarter (25.6%) or 3,736 of these decisions.

Understanding the factors that drive high individual numbers of waivers, postponements and withdrawals might help the Service develop strategies that will reduce the occurrence of multiple delays and cancellations. For example, if each of these 735 offenders had just one waiver, withdrawal or postponement, the national number of decisions would be reduced by over one-fifth. Consequently, in order to better understand this group of offenders, we examined their demographic characteristics, offence histories, sentence length, security rating, need and risk levels, institutional behaviours as well as the institutions and regions where these offenders were incarcerated. In addition, examples of individual cases are presented to illustrate how multiple delays and cancellations (e.g., when an offender requests both day and full parole at the same hearing) result in an inflated number of decisions.

The outcomes of the profile of high volume users revealed that there were many similarities with the offenders who had three or fewer waivers, withdrawals or postponements. There were, however, some differences between the groups. First, offenders with higher levels of risk and need appear to be more likely to cancel a parole review than to delay their hearing repeatedly. Second, multiple consecutive postponements appear to be linked to factors that have not been resolved and that may impact the Board's decision to grant parole, such as when an offender has difficulty finding a placement in a community-based residential facility, when a correctional program is incomplete, psychological or other reports have not submitted to the

¹ Definitions of the categories of delays and cancellations are reported in the Appendix.

Board, or due to a pending court decision (such as outstanding charges). Third, high volume users were more likely to have two delays or cancellations recorded for one scheduled hearing. This means that these offenders were scheduled to be reviewed for both day and full parole on the same date, and each delay or cancellation resulted in a separate count. For example, double-counting accounts for almost one-fifth of the total number of waivers, postponements, and withdrawals for both day and full parole between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2009. As a result, this method of counting decisions artificially inflates the number of waivers, withdrawals, and postponements. Finally, in addition to offender specific differences, there are noticeable regional and institutional differences in the location of high volume users. For example, this study found that the Quebec and Pacific regions had a higher proportion of high compared to low volume users.

By recognizing the number of delays and cancellations generated by high volume users, and by being cognizant of the double-counting of delays and cancellations for scheduled parole hearings, the factors impacting these trends can be better understood and, when possible minimized to reduce the frequency of multiple delays and cancellations.

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Introduction

There is increasing interest in understanding the characteristics of offenders who draw an inordinate amount of time, attention, or resources in correctional systems: what some correctional professionals have labelled high demand users (Chandler Ford, 2005). In some cases, a relatively small group of offenders can drive larger trends, impact services, and strain operational resources. Research can play an important role in identifying the characteristics of these individuals or groups and help the organization understand the problems more clearly; which may in turn lead to more effective interventions. Chandler Ford (2005), for instance, examined jail arrestees and found that some individuals had been admitted to a local jail dozens of times, and others had more than 100 arrests. Closer examination of these arrestees found that they typically had co-occurring disorders – a combination of mental health and substance abuse problems, and were often chronic minor offenders. In response to the problem of these high volume users, Gladwell (2006) noted that some jurisdictions are developing innovative strategies for these chronic offenders, and he reported that these interventions have reduced costs and enabled the justice system to divert their resources toward more serious or higher needs offenders.

An example of this type of challenge was identified in a recent report by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC or the Service) and the National Parole Board (NPB or the Board) examining waivers, postponements and withdrawals of parole reviews (Cabana, Beauchamp, Emeno, & Bottos, 2009). These delays or cancellations are of interest to both the NPB and the Service as they indicate an instance where an offender was eligible for review but did not appear before the Board on the scheduled hearing date. These can occur as a result of an offender's decision not to appear before the Board or when the National Parole Board chooses to delay an offender's review (e.g., adjournment or administrative adjournment). This study focuses only on those decisions made by the offender and includes waivers, postponements and withdrawals. A waiver is a written statement by the offender that renounces his or her legal right to a hearing and/or review by the NPB (Commissioner's Directive [CD] 712-1; *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, ss. 123(2)). A postponement is a request made by the offender to delay a review or hearing and can be made anytime before the review or hearing begins (CD 712-1). An offender may also withdraw a parole review application to appear before the Board by submitting a

request advising the Board that they no longer wish to be reviewed (CD 712-1). (Appendix A provides a summary of the terms defined here). Under any of these circumstances, a parole review is not completed as scheduled and a decision to conditionally release an offender is not made.

Delays and cancellations occur for a broad range of reasons. A certain proportion of these can be attributed to unfinished correctional programs, incomplete information sharing (e.g., psychological assessment or casework incomplete) and/or not having an adequate release plan in place. Delays and cancellations are particularly costly to the NPB when they occur at the last minute: after Board members have read and reviewed the offender's file or have traveled to an institution for the hearing. These are also important to CSC as they may result in an offender remaining in prison when they could be safely managed in the community. Furthermore, waivers, postponements, and withdrawals had been occurring at an increasing rate. The NPB (2008) reported that the proportion of federal full parole pre-release decisions delayed (postponed, rescheduled and adjourned) or cancelled (waived or withdrew) increased from 55% in 1998/99 to 62% in 2007/2008 (NPB, 2008). In fiscal year (FY) 2007/08, for instance, there were 8,061 of these decisions, although this total decreased to 7,352 the following year, suggesting that measures intended to decrease these delays and cancellations may have been successful.

A descriptive profile and interviews were conducted by Cabana and colleagues (2009) to better understand factors contributing to parole review delays and cancellations. Reasons for not appearing before the Board, as reported by offenders, typically included incomplete correctional programming, a perceived lack of support for a conditional release from their parole officer and/or case management team (CMT), or factors that reflected poorly on their behaviour, such as engaging in institutional misconduct, a failed urinalysis or failure on previous community releases.

The 2009 research also found that a total of 4,924 offenders accounted for 8,061 decisions that resulted in delays or cancellations² of day or full parole review hearings during fiscal year 2007/2008. Most offenders (66%) had only one delay or cancellation and another one-quarter had two or three instances recorded during this time period. Of particular interest, Cabana

² For the purposes of the 2009 study, delays and cancellations included waivers, postponements and withdrawals as well as adjournments, administrative adjournments and reschedules.

and colleagues (2009) found that there was a very small group of offenders approximately 8% (n = 376) who accounted for almost one-quarter of all delays and cancellations. Moreover, some offenders had ten or more recorded instances where they chose not to appear for a scheduled review, raising questions as to the reasons for and factors leading to multiple delays and cancellations.

Multiple delays or cancellations may include waivers and withdrawals of applications, however, postponements of parole reviews are likely contributing to repeated delays. Generally a waiver is valid until the next review date (two years) as required by legislation (*Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, ss. 123(5)). Thus, once an offender waives a full parole review³, another review will not be scheduled for a period of two years unless the offender submits an application requesting to appear before the legislated review date. A postponement of a parole review typically does not exceed three months (NPB Policy Manual, 2009), however the Board may accept requests for lengthier postponements. Therefore, it is possible, at two to three month intervals, that an offender accumulate multiple postponements over a two-year period.

This follow-up report examines the group of offenders with multiple delays and cancellations (referred to from here on as "high volume users") and explores potential explanations for the rate at which these occur. The purpose was to determine whether high volume users differ from low volume users on a number of characteristics, examine the possible reasons for multiple delays and consider regional differences in the rates at which these occur. Given that some waivers and postponements are sometimes perceived as indicators of preventable delays in the offender's transition to the community (Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI), 2001; 2007; 2009), further examination of the high volume user group identified in previous research may help better understand the need for multiple delays. This research also raises questions as to whether waivers and postponements are, in fact, good indicators of preventable delays.

³ Under current legislation an offender cannot waive a day parole review.

Method

Participants

Data from the Offender Management System (OMS), an automated CSC database containing offender file information, was used to obtain information for individuals with at least one waiver, postponement or withdrawal between April, 2007 and March, 2009. A total of 8,604 offenders had at least one delay or cancellation during this period. Of these, 335 (4%) were women offenders. Twenty-two percent of this group were Aboriginal offenders.

Procedure/Analyses

In the analyses that follow, a number of offender-characteristics (e.g., demographic, offence-related, and risk/need profiles) as well as institution-related factors (e.g., institutional misconducts or charges, placement in segregation,) including the CSC region of incarceration, were explored in order to examine possible reasons for multiple delays or cancellations. Information available in OMS pertaining to the reason for the waiver, postponement or withdrawal was also obtained. Although these codes provide a limited explanation for the waiver, postponement or withdrawal, they will help explore potential differences in the factors leading to multiple delays and cancellations.

In order to define the group of offenders with a greater number of delays or cancellations, offenders with three decisions or less were labelled the low volume user group and offenders with four or more decisions were labelled the high volume user group. These categories are used throughout this report.

A series of descriptive analyses were completed in order to examine the characteristics of offenders with few delays and cancellations and those with multiple waivers, postponements or withdrawals. Chi-square tests were used to examine differences between the sub-groups as well as to discern any differences based on factors such as regional placement, ethnicity, and sentence length.

Results

Between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2009, a total of 8,604 offenders accounted for 14,563 waivers, postponements or withdrawals of day or full parole reviews. The total number of waivers, postponements and withdrawals for FY 07/08 and 08/09 are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Waivers, Postponements and Withdrawals for FY 2007/08 and 2008/09.*

Fiscal Year	Delay or Cancellation Type							
	Waivers		Postponements		Withdrawal		Total	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)*
2007/08	46.1	(3,321)	44.3	(3,194)	9.6	(690)	100	(7,205)
2008/09	44.1	(3,244)	46.9	(3,449)	9.0	(665)	100	(7,358)

* N is equal to the number of waivers, postponements and withdrawal decisions.

As indicated in Table 2, three-quarters (75%) of delays or cancellations were related to full parole reviews. Waivers and postponements were almost evenly split with waivers accounting for 45% and postponements 46% of delays and cancellations.

Table 2. *Waivers, Postponements and Withdrawals for Day and Full Parole Reviews.*

Review Type	Delay or Cancellation Type							
	Waivers		Postponements		Withdrawal		Total	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)*
Day Parole	0.2	(3)**	17.2	(2,499)	8.3	(1,210)	25.5	(3,712)
Full Parole	45.1	(6,562)	28.5	(4,144)	1.0	(145)	74.6	(10,851)
Total	45.1	(6,565)	45.6	(6,643)	9.3	(1,355)	100	(14,563)

* N is equal to the number of waivers, postponements and withdrawal decisions.

**Reporting error, offenders cannot waive a day parole review under current legislation.

Note: Percentage sums may not equal 100 due to rounding.

The number of waivers, postponement and/or withdrawals by offender group is presented in Table 3. This table shows that almost two thirds (63.9%) of offenders only had one decision,

one-fifth (20.8%) had two decisions and 6.7% of this group had three decisions; accounting for 91.4% of all waivers, postponements or withdrawals. The group of offenders with four or more decisions is relatively small (n = 735), representing 8.5% of offenders who waived, postponed or withdrew, and accounted for over one-quarter (25.6%) or 3,736 decisions. This group ranged from offenders with four decisions each (4.6%, 392 offenders) to a single offender who had accumulated 26 delays and/or cancellations in two years.

Table 3. *Waiver, Postponement, and Withdrawal Counts by Offenders between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2009.*

Waiver, Postponement and/or Withdrawal (Count)	Offenders %	Offenders (n) [†]	Total Waivers, Postponements and/or Withdrawals %	Total Waivers, Postponements and/or Withdrawals (n) [‡]
Low Volume User Group: Three Decisions or Less				
1	63.9*	(5,499)	37.8	(5,500)
2	20.8*	(1,788)	24.6	(3,578)
3	6.8*	(582)	12.0	(1,749)
High Volume User Group: Four or More Decisions				
4	4.6	(392)	10.8	(1,568)
5	1.4	(124)	4.3	(620)
6	1.4	(121)	5.0	(726)
7	0.4	(33)	1.6	(231)
8	0.4	(35)	1.9	(280)
9	0.2	(16)	1.0	(144)
10	0.08	(7)	0.5	(70)
11	0.02	(2)	0.2	(22)
12	0.03	(3)	0.3	(36)
13	0.01	(1)	0.09	(13)
26	0.01	(1)	0.2	(26)
	100	(8,604)	100	(14,563)

* A total of six decisions were missing from the offender database.

[†] N is equal to the number of offenders.

[‡] N is equal to the number of waiver, postponement or withdrawal decisions.

Note: Percentage sums may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Offenders with three decisions or less were more likely to waive (56.8%) a parole review than to postpone (34.4%) or withdraw an application (8.8%, see Table 4). Conversely, offenders

with four decisions or more were more likely to postpone (78%) a parole review than to waive (11.1%) or withdraw an application (10.9%). This finding shows that the high volume group is more than twice as likely to postpone a review – whereas the low volume user group (three or fewer decisions) was five times more likely to waive their appearance before the Board.

Table 4. *Multiple Decision Offender Groups, April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2009.*

Review Type	Delay or Cancellation Type							
	Waivers		Postponements		Withdrawal		Total	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)*
Low Volume User Group	56.8	(6,150)	34.4	(3,728)	8.8	(949)	100	(10,827)
High Volume User Group	11.1	(415)	78.0	(2,915)	10.9	(406)	100	(3,736)

* N is equal to the number of waivers, postponements and withdrawal decisions.

It is important to note that some administrative procedures may result in two delays or cancellations being recorded for one scheduled parole review or hearing. That is, a delay or cancellation may be recorded for a day parole review as well as a full parole review that were scheduled to take place during a single hearing. Since both day and full parole applications can be reviewed during one hearing, the number of postponements, waivers and withdrawals do not necessarily reflect the *number of times a hearing* was delayed or cancelled. Without taking these double hits into consideration, delay and cancellation trends are artificially inflated and may be misinterpreted as reflecting the number of times a hearing did not take place.

Of the 14,563 waivers, postponements and withdrawals recorded for fiscal years 2007/08 and 2008/09, there were 2,507 instances when a day and full parole review were scheduled for a single hearing and were delayed or cancelled. As shown in Table 5, offenders with four or more decisions were more likely to have instances where two decisions scheduled for one hearing were delayed or cancelled (66% versus 12.1% for offenders with three decisions or less).

Table 5. *Number of Delays or Cancellations by Parole Hearings.*

	User Groups				
	Low User		High User		Total (n)*
	%	(n)	%	(n)	
One delay or cancellation for one scheduled hearing	90.0	(9,747)	61.8	(2,309)	(12,056)
Two delays or cancellations for one scheduled hearing	9.9	(1,080)	38.2	(1,427)	(2,507)
Total	100	(10,827)	100	(3,736)	(14,563)

* N is equal to the number of waivers, postponements and withdrawal decisions

Offender Characteristics

A number of demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, ethnicity), offence type, sentence length, institutional behaviour (e.g., involvement in minor or serious incidents or placement in segregation) were examined. One of the goals of examining these factors was to explore whether there were individual characteristics that may help explain multiple waivers, postponements, or withdrawals—especially for the high volume user group.

The proportion of male and female offenders in the low and high volume user groups were similar (see Table 6). This suggests that men offenders were equally likely as women offenders to delay or cancel a parole review four or more times within the two year time period ($\chi^2(1) = 0.015, p = .902$).

Table 6. *User Group by Gender*

Gender	User Groups						
	Total Inst. Population (%)	Low Volume Users %	Low Volume Users (n)	High Volume Users %	High Volume Users (n)	Total %	Total (n)
Men	96.3	91.4	(7,562)	8.6	(707)	100	(8,269)
Women	3.7	91.6	(307)	8.4	(28)	100	(335)

Previous research (Cabana et al., 2009) suggests that Aboriginal offenders (a group that includes North American Indians, Innu, Métis, and Inuit) may be over-represented in the number of delays and cancellations of parole reviews. In order to examine these possible differences, the

low and high volume user groups were disaggregated based on ethnocultural status. The three largest offender groups—Caucasian, Aboriginal and Black offenders—representing 92.7% of the institutional population during fiscal years 2007 through 2009 (CSC, 2009) were examined. The representation of Caucasian (66.6%) and Black offenders (6.4%) in the low and high volume user groups combined was similar to their representation in the institutional populations, 65.7% and 7.4% respectively. Aboriginal offenders represented slightly less than one-fifth (19.6%) of all offenders in the institutional population (CSC, 2009), but accounted for 22.4% of offenders in the low and high volume user groups combined.

Interestingly, in comparison to Caucasian (8.8%) and Black offenders (10.3%), Aboriginal offenders (6.6%) were less likely to have four or more delays or cancellations. Differences between high and low volume users based on ethnicity were statistically significant, $\chi^2(3) = 15.3, p = .002$. Within these groups, the proportion of high and low volume users were almost equivalent, however, within the Aboriginal offender subgroup, slightly more were low volume than high volume users (23% and 17% respectively). Correspondingly, of the ethnic groups, Aboriginal offenders had the highest proportion of waivers (70%), followed by postponements (21%) and withdrawals (8%). Similar trends in delay or cancellation types were observed across all ethnocultural groups.

Table 7. *User Group by Ethnocultural Status.*

Ethnicity	% Total Inst. Population	User Groups				Total	
		Low Volume User %	Low Volume User (n)	High Volume User %	High Volume User (n)	%	(n)
Caucasian	65.7	91.2	(5,187)	8.8	(503)	100	(5,690)
Aboriginal*	19.6	93.4	(1,785)	6.6	(126)	100	(1,911)
Black	7.4	89.7	(487)	10.3	(56)	100	(543)
Other	-	89.4	(356)	10.6	(42)	100	(398)
Total	-	-	(7,815)	-	(727)	-	(8,542)**

* The Aboriginal group includes Inuit, Métis, North American Indian and Innu offenders.

**Ethnicity data was missing for 62 cases. Percentages were calculated based on available data.

Offender risk and need levels were also examined, as it was thought that offenders who delayed or cancelled multiple parole reviews may have higher risk/need profiles. Cabana et al. (2009) reported, for example, that offenders who waived, postponed, or withdrew a parole

hearings were more likely to have higher levels of risk and need at intake than those who appeared before the Board for scheduled parole reviews.

Analyses revealed that offenders with low levels of risk and need had the smallest proportions of delays and cancellations, representing only 5.8% (based on risk) and 3.2% (based on need) of all decisions in the two year period. Moderate risk and need offenders, by contrast, represented 35.7% and 25.7% of all decisions respectively. Offenders who had the highest levels of risk and need, however, also had the highest proportion of decisions, with 58.4% and 71.1% of all waivers, postponements and withdrawals. These findings are consistent with earlier work by Cabana and colleagues (2009) suggesting that offenders who waive, postpone or withdraw a parole review are generally high risk and need.

Interestingly, however, the proportion of offenders assessed as high risk as well as those assessed as high need was greater for offenders in the low volume user group (59% and 72%) than those in the high volume user group (50% and 67% respectively, see Tables 8 and 9). The high volume user group showed greater proportions of offenders assessed as moderate risk and need in comparison to the low volume user group. When risk and need levels were compared to the number of delays or cancellations recorded within this study's timeframe, greater proportions of high risk (68%) and high need (66%) offenders had only one delay or cancellation in comparison with low and moderate need offenders (56% and 59%) and low and moderate risk offenders (60% and 59%). Furthermore, high risk and need offenders were more likely to waive (68%, 67%) than moderate risk/need (58%, 55%) and low risk and need offenders (54%, 49%). These findings suggest that offenders with the highest risk and need levels are waiving their parole reviews rather than delaying them repeatedly.

Table 8. *Offender Risk Level by User Group.*

Risk Level	User Groups				Total	
	Low Volume User		High Volume User		%	(n)
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
Low	6.0	(464)	3.8	(27)	-	(491)
Moderate	34.7	(2,668)	46.2	(331)	-	(2,999)
High	59.2	(4,549)	50.0	(358)	-	(4,907)
Total	100	(7,681)	100	(716)	-	(8,397)

Note: Information on risk level was unavailable for 207 cases. Percentage sums may not equal 100 due to rounding. Differences between user groups and risk level were statistically significant ($\chi^2(2) = 39.534, p < .001$).

Table 9. *Offender Need Level by User Group.*

Need Level	User Groups				Total	
	Low Volume User		High Volume User		%	(n)
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
Low	3.2	(249)	2.9	(21)	-	(270)
Moderate	25.3	(1,942)	30.0	(215)	-	(2,157)
High	71.5	(5,490)	67.0	(480)	-	(5,970)
Total	100	(7,681)	100	(716)	-	(8,397)

Note: Information on risk level was unavailable for 207 cases. Percentage sums may not equal 100 due to rounding. Differences between user groups and need level were statistically significant at $p < .05$ ($\chi^2(2) = 7.47, p = .021$).

Two-thirds of the offenders who had at least one waiver, postponement or withdrawal had a medium security classification (66.1%), while less than one-quarter (22.7%) were in minimum security institutions with the remaining 10.6% assessed as maximum security. Table 10 shows these offenders disaggregated into the low and high volume user groups. The differences between these two groups, however, were negligible.

Table 10. *Offender Security Level by Use.*

Security Level	User Groups			
	Low User Group		High User Group	
	%	(n)	%	(n)
Minimum	22.4	(1,763)	25.3	(186)
Medium	66.1	(5,202)	66.4	(488)
Maximum	10.8	(851)	8.0	(59)
Total	100	(7,869)	100	(735)

Note: Information was missing on security classification for 55 cases. Percentage sums may not equal 100 due to rounding. Difference between user groups and security level were significant at $p < .05$ ($\chi^2(2) = 7.409, p = .025$).

There was no statistically significant difference in the average sentence length between the low user group (i.e., offenders with three or less decisions) and the high user group (i.e., offenders with four delays or cancellations or more) ($M = 4.71$ years, $SD = 5.0$, and $M = 4.38$ year, $SD = 4.13$ respectively; $t(7501) = 1.627, p = 0.104$).

Table 11 reveals that the proportion of offenders in the high user group was not different from those in the low user group based on most serious current offence.

Table 11. *Most Serious Offence by User Group.*

Most Serious Offence	User Groups			
	Low User Group		High User Group	
	%	(n)	%	(n)
Robbery	28.8	(2,262)	29.5	(217)
Homicide	16.7	(1,316)	16.2	(119)
Assault	15.6	(1,224)	14.6	(107)
Sexual	13.9	(1,092)	12.0	(88)
Break and Enter	8.0	(630)	7.2	(53)
Drugs	5.2	(412)	6.5	(48)
Other Property	3.3	(260)	4.2	(31)
Other Criminal Code	2.8	(221)	3.3	(24)
Other Violent	2.5	(198)	2.9	(21)
Attempt Murder	1.7	(137)	2.4	(18)
Impaired Offence	1.4	(113)	1.2	(9)
Total	100	(7,865)	100	(735)

Note: Information was missing on most serious offence for 4 cases. Percentages were calculated based on the available data. Percentage sums may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Offender Management System (OMS) codes completed by parole officers to indicate, from an automated list, the reason for the waiver, postponement or withdrawal were obtained and are presented in the table below.⁴

Table 12. *Delay or Cancellation Reasons by User Group.*

Reasons for Delays or Cancellations	User Groups			
	Low Volume User		High Volume User	
	%	(n)	%	(n)
Avoid a negative recommendation or decision	15.8	(1,383)	13.3	(378)
Not interested	7.3	(641)	2.8	(80)
(Other)	17.5	(1,526)	22.9	(650)
Other plan	11.5	(1,008)	8.7	(248)
Pending court/appeal decision	1.3	(113)	2.6	(74)
Refuses program/intervention	0.3	(27)	-	-
Completed program/risk unassumed	0.1	(10)	0.2	(5)
Program not completed	40.1	(3,504)	35.2	(1,002)
No CRF/Community support	2.3	(202)	4.4	(126)
Information missing	0.9	(77)	2.5	(72)
Assistant not available	1.0	(86)	3.0	(86)
Case preparation incomplete	1.7	(152)	4.3	(123)
International transfer/sent reduction	0.2	(15)	-	-
Total	100	(8,744)	100	(2,844)

Note: Information on the reason for the waiver, postponement or withdrawal was not available for 2,975 decisions. Percentages were calculated based on the available data.

It should be noted that the *Program not completed* category must be interpreted with caution since this OMS coding option does not distinguish, for example, between required and non-required programs, number of previous and failed program attempts, as well as offender motivation and program management issues. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that offenders with four or more decisions were less likely than offenders with three or less decisions to report programs not completed as the reason for a parole review delay or cancellation.

⁴ It should be noted that the source of information for reasons reported below is different than in a previous study which used reasons reported by a sample group of offenders. See Cabana and colleagues (2009).

Since postponements are an important contributor to multiple delays, reasons were also examined based on delay or cancellation type. As might be expected, the proportion of reasons for postponements were greater for factors such as *Case preparation not completed*, *Assistants not available*, and *Information missing*, while waiver reasons were higher for reasons such as *Not interested*, and *Avoid a negative recommendation or decision*.

Table 13. *Delay and Cancellation Reasons by Waiver, Postponement or Withdrawal.*

Reasons for Delays or Cancellations	Delay and Cancellation Type					
	Waiver		Postponement		Withdrawal	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
Avoid a negative recommendation or decision	16.1	(892)	12.6	(628)	22.9	(241)
Not interested	10.8	(595)	0.7	(35)	8.6	(91)
Other	14.9	(825)	23.1	(1,153)	18.8	(198)
Other plan	13.0	(717)	8.1	(407)	12.5	(132)
Pending court/appeal decision	0.9	(50)	2.5	(123)	1.3	(14)
Refuses program/intervention	0.5	(25)	0	(1)	0.1	(1)
Completed program/risk unassumed	0.1	(6)	0.1	(7)	0.1	(2)
Program not completed	41.3	(2,286)	39.4	(1,969)	23.8	(251)
No CRF/Community support	1.8	(100)	2.5	(123)	10.0	(105)
Information missing	0.1	(5)	2.8	(140)	0.4	(4)
Assistant not available	0	(3)	3.3	(167)	0.2	(2)
Case preparation incomplete	0.4	(21)	4.9	(245)	0.9	(9)
International transfer/sent reduction	0.1	(9)	0	(3)	0.3	(3)
Total	100	(5,534)	100	(5,001)	100	(1,053)

Note: Information on the reason for the waiver, postponement or withdrawal was not available for 2,975 decisions. Percentages were calculated based on the available data.

Previous research (Cabana et al., 2009) found that some offenders waived, postponed or withdrew their parole hearings following involvement in some form of institutional misconduct. Table 14 shows eight different categories that reflect institutional misconduct or placement in segregation. The low and high user groups were compared on these factors to explore whether these may have a role in multiple delays and cancellations. It was plausible that offenders involved in major incidents might want to delay or cancel a parole hearing recognizing the

potential impact of these acts on the Board's decisions. However, as seen in Table 14, the average involvement in institutional incidents for both the high and low user groups, including placement in segregation, was approximately equal. In order to test this assumption, t-tests (statistical tests that compare the means of two groups) revealed that, with the exception of Victim of minor incident, there were no statistically significant differences between the high and low volume users.

Table 14. *Mean Number of Institutional Misconduct by User Groups.*

	Low Volume Users		High Volume Users		T-test		
	(n)	M	(n)	M	t	df	Sig.
Serious institutional charge	7869	2.7	735	1.1	0.77	8602	0.44
Minor institutional charge	7869	2.4	735	2.1	1.41	8602	0.16
Victim of major incident	7869	0.04	735	0.05	-0.95	8602	0.34
Victim of minor incident	7869	0.02	735	0.03	-2.33	8602	0.02
Perpetrator/associate of major incident	7869	0.18	735	0.16	1.54	8602	0.12
Perpetrator/associate of minor incident	7869	0.92	735	0.92	-0.03	8602	0.97
Voluntary segregation (days)	7812	0.17	732	0.16	0.30	8542	0.76
Involuntary segregation (days)	7812	0.56	732	0.48	1.78	8542	0.08

Note: Means represent a charge, incident or days in segregation count computed as a proportion of the offender's current sentence. For indeterminate sentences, time from admission was used.

In order to further evaluate whether high volume offenders were involved in institutional misconduct at a higher rate than their low volume counterparts, a number of variables were created for each group that enabled us to compare their involvement in serious misconduct, victimization, being a perpetrator, as well as placement in segregation. The results of these analyses show that the group averages of the high and low volume users were very similar, and statistical analyses (t-tests) revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between these groups on the different indicators of misconduct.

Regional and Institutional Comparisons

Given that previous research (Cabana et al., 2009) suggests that there are regional differences between waiver, postponements and withdrawal rates, possible regional differences between the low and high volume users were examined. These two groups are presented according to CSC region in Table 15. The results show that the Quebec and Pacific regions have the greatest proportion of high volume users (12% respectively), whereas the Prairie region has the lowest percentage of high volume users (5%).

Table 15. *Decision Groups by CSC Region.*

Region	% Total Inst. Population	Decision Groups By Regions				Total	
		Low Volume User %	Low Volume User (n)	High Volume User %	High Volume User (n)	%	(n)
Atlantic	10	92.3	(863)	7.4	(69)	100	(932)
Quebec	23.6	88.1	(1,752)	11.9	(236)	100	(1,988)
Ontario	27.3	91.8	(2,196)	8.2	(196)	100	(2,392)
Prairies	24.9	95.3	(2,049)	4.7	(102)	100	(2,151)
Pacific	14.1	88.4	(1,008)	11.6	(132)	100	(1,140)
Total	100	-	(7,868)	-	(735)		(8,603)

Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

In addition to examining regional differences, institutional differences were also examined. Cabana and colleagues (2009) found that offenders often reported having little knowledge of the parole process and relied upon other inmates for information. As a result, it is possible that sharing of *misinformation* among inmates within some institutions contributes to differences in the numbers of waivers, postponements and withdrawals that occur. In addition, there may also be aspects of an institution's practices that contribute to the differences in the number of multiple delays and cancellations (e.g., staff recommendation of one type of decision over another when more than one option is possible). As such, it is important to consider where differences occur to better enable correctional staff to overcome these challenges (e.g., reduce the spread of inaccurate information that may be contributing to a greater number of delays and cancellations).

Table 16 compares low and high volume users for 16 institutions that account for 84% of

the offenders who delayed or cancelled a parole review. In some instances, the number of high volume users for specific institutions is very low, however, as can be seen in the table, the highest proportion of offenders who delayed or cancelled multiple parole reviews were at institutions in the Quebec and Pacific regions.

Table 16. *Waivers, Postponements, and Cancellations by Institution.*

Institutions	User Groups		User Groups		Total (n)
	Low Volume User %	(n)	High Volume User %	(n)	
Atlantic					
Institution 1	92.0	(243)	8.0	(21)	(264)
Institution 2	92.0	(185)	8.0	(16)	(201)
Quebec					
Institution 3	83.7	(118)	16.3	(23)	(141)
Institution 4	84.1	(175)	15.9	(33)	(208)
Institution 5	88.8	(198)	11.2	(25)	(223)
Institution 6	86.0	(147)	14.0	(24)	(171)
Ontario					
Institution 7	95.4	(354)	4.6	(17)	(371)
Institution 8	94.7	(341)	5.3	(19)	(360)
Institution 9	88.4	(267)	11.6	(35)	(302)
Institution 10	88.2	(149)	11.8	(20)	(169)
Prairies					
Institution 11	97.2	(275)	2.8	(8)	(283)
Institution 12	97.7	(251)	2.3	(6)	(257)
Institution 13	94.6	(296)	5.4	(17)	(313)
Pacific					
Institution 14	84.7	(194)	15.3	(35)	(229)
Institution 15	84.1	(111)	15.9	(21)	(132)
Institution 16	84.1	(111)	15.9	(21)	(132)

The security levels of high and low volume users were also examined. Of the total number of offenders, the majority (66%) had a medium security classification, 11% had a maximum security classification and 23% were classified at a minimum security level. There

was an equal proportion of offenders designated with a medium security classification between the low and high user groups (67%). The low user group had slightly more offenders with a maximum security classification than the high user group (11% and 8% respectively) while this group had slightly more offenders classified at a minimum security level than the low user group (25% and 22%).

Whether the offender resided in an institution or in the community (e.g., on day parole) at the time of the delay or cancellation was also considered. Nearly all offenders were incarcerated: less than one percent (17 of 8,604) were in the community at the time of the delay or cancellation.

Case Examples

In order to better demonstrate circumstances under which multiple delays and cancellations may take place, five examples of offenders with particularly high numbers of multiple decisions are presented in the pages that follow. Information was obtained from OMS data and individual file reviews. Each case study provides a summary of delays and cancellations and a brief review of information on file pertaining to the circumstances leading up to the offender's decision to delay or cancel the parole review.

Case A. This case involves a middle-aged recidivist serving a Life sentence for second degree murder. As shown in the Table 17, between 2007 and 2009, 13 delays and cancellations were recorded to his file. These relate to seven scheduled parole review hearings. According to reports on file (Correctional Plan Progress Report [CPPR], Assessment for Decision), the offender proposed a day parole release plan to his case management team (CMT) that included his participation in a Section 84 release. He reportedly agreed with his CMT that a full parole release was premature. As stated in several CPPR in June 2007, the offender was not supported by his parole officer (PO)/CMT for release. Community Strategies were requested by the CMT to assess support from three British Columbia communities in May and November, 2007 and May 2008. All responses were negative as no community-based residential facilities (CBRF) supported the residency of this offender. Although this was not explicitly stated in the reports reviewed, it appears that the offender's interest in a Section 84 release, denied requests for support from different communities, and the need to stabilize on his methadone program were

factors contributing to the review being delayed and eventually cancelled. The table below indicates the parole review type, day or full parole, the recommendation column indicates whether the offender was supported by his PO/CMT for a release, status indicates the type of delay or cancellation, and reasons include those coded in OMS and comments provided by the offender or, in the absence of these, by the NPB.

Table 17. *Case A Delay and Cancellation Summary Table.*

Hearing	Type	Recom.	Status	OMS Reason	Offender/NPB Comments
2007-06-01	Full Parole		Postponed	N/A	N/A
2007-08-01	Day Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other Plan	Change of release plans and time to
2007-08-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other Plan	stabilize on methadone program.
2007-09-01	Day Parole	Deny	Postponed	N/A	N/A
2007-09-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	N/A	N/A
2007-10-01	Day Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other Plan	Pursuing Section 84 Release to
2007-10-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	Case Preparation Incomplete	Cwenengital Aboriginal Society.
2008-01-01	Day Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other Plan	Continue to develop Section 84 Release and to further stabilize on methadone dosages.
2008-01-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	N/A	N/A
2008-02-01	Day Parole	Deny	Postponed	N/A	N/A
2008-02-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	N/A	N/A
2008-05-01	Day Parole	Deny	Withdrawn	Other Plan	Continues to develop Section 84 Release plans and further stabilize on new methadone dosage. Medical concerns require testing and follow- up.
2008-05-01	Full Parole	Deny	Waived	Other Plan	Continues to develop Section 84 Release plans and further stabilize on new methadone dosage. Medical concerns require testing and follow- up.

Note: Alternate shading represent hearing dates. All hearings involved two reviews, one for day parole and one for full parole, except the first.

Case B. Case B involves an offender who was serving a term of two years and nine months for arson. As shown in the table below, between 2007 and 2009, 12 delays and cancellations were recorded to his file. These relate to six scheduled parole review hearings. A CPPR dated November 2007 indicated that the offender was supported for a day parole release and he had been accepted to reside in a CBRF. Information regarding pending sexual charges, however, resulted in a placement in protective custody and a subsequent institutional transfer. He was convicted of the sexual offences in question in 2008. Although not stated on file, it is likely that this new conviction led to the offender's decision to withdraw the day parole application and waive the full parole review.

Table 18. *Case B Delay and Cancellation Summary Table.*

Hearing	Type	Recom.	Status	OMS Reason	Offender/NPB Comments
2008-01-01	Day Parole	Grant	Postponed	N/A	N/A
2008-01-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	N/A	Requests 2 months postponement due to ongoing police investigation.
2008-03-01	Day Parole	Grant	Postponed	N/A	N/A
2008-03-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	Pending court/appeal decision	N/A
2008-04-01	Day Parole	Grant	Postponed	N/A	N/A
2008-04-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	N/A	N/A
2008-05-01	Day Parole	Grant	Postponed	Pending court/appeal decision	Outstanding charges
2008-05-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	Pending court/appeal decision	N/A
2008-06-01	Day Parole	Grant	Postponed	N/A	N/A
2008-06-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	Pending court/appeal decision	N/A
2008-09-01	Day Parole	Grant	Withdrawn	Pending court/appeal decision	Outstanding charges
2008-09-01	Full Parole	Deny	Waived	N/A	N/A

Note: Alternate colour bars represent hearing dates. All hearings involved two reviews, one for day parole and one for full parole.

Case C. This offender was serving a term of six years and six months for robbery, possession of a weapon and possession of illegal substances with intent to distribute. As shown in the table below, between 2007 and 2009, 12 delays/cancellations were recorded to his file. These relate to six scheduled parole review hearings. The offender was not supported by his PO/CMT for a day or full parole review. In early 2007, the offender's community strategy report indicated that he was not supported by the community-based residential facility (CBRF) to which he had applied. As indicated in a CPPR (2007-07-30), the offender reportedly requested a three month postponement of his review in order to revise his release plan to include substance abuse treatment. He was subsequently placed in preventive segregation for suspicion of involvement in the manufacturing and distribution of alcohol. Consequently his security classification was raised and he was transferred to a maximum security institution. In May 2008, a new community strategy in support of the offender's release plan was requested. Once again, the CBRF did not support his release. Comments recorded under the decision status inquiry in OMS also suggest that a change in parole officer may also have contributed to delays.

Table 19. *Case C Delay and Cancellation Summary Table.*

Hearing	Type	Recom.	Status	OMS Reason	Offender/NPB Comments
2007-07-01	Day Parole	Deny	Postponed	Avoid a negative recommendation and/or decision	Postpones morning of hearing.
2007-07-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	Avoid a negative recommendation and/or decision	Postpones morning of hearing. Requested postponement to prepare release plan.
2007-10-01	Day Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other	To continue working on making progress and to assess next steps with PO.
2007-10-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other	To continue working on making progress and to assess next steps with PO.
2008-01-01	Day Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other	Due to change in PO, requesting postponement to allow chance to get to know each other.
2008-01-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other	Due to change in PO, requesting postponement to allow chance to get to know each other.
2008-03-01	Day Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other	Wants to lower security classification and to be transferred to medium security before seeing Board
2008-03-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other	Wants to lower security classification and to be transferred to medium security before seeing Board
2008-06-01	Day Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other	Wants to lower security classification
2008-06-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other	Wants to lower security classification
2008-08-01	Day Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other Plan	To prepare release plan.
2008-08-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other Plan	To prepare release plan.

Note: Alternate colour bars represent hearing dates. All hearings involved two reviews, one for day parole and one for full parole.

Case D. Case D involves a middle-aged first time offender who was serving an eight year sentence for aggravated assault and use of a firearm. Between 2007 and 2009, this offender delayed or cancelled 11 day or full parole reviews related to seven parole hearings. The offender's PO/CMT were not supporting a day or full parole release. According to information in

a 2007 CPPR, multiple applications to CBRFs were returned with negative responses. In a community assessment completed in early 2007, the CBRF to which the offender applied indicated that they wanted the offender to complete the Family Violence Program prior to release and cascade down to minimum security. The offender completed a Moderate Intensity Family Violence (MIFV) program, however a subsequent CBRF application was returned indicating they were not supporting the offender's release since his security classification had not been reduced. Since the MIFV program was completed in July 2007 it is unclear why OMS codes and NPB comments indicate incomplete programs as the reason for delays in November and December 2007. According to another CPPR on file, the offender appeared before the Board for a day and full parole review in January 2008 and the decision was made to adjourn the review for 60 days in order for the offender to explore alternate release plans. File information suggest that no CBRF support was obtained.

Table 20. *Case D Delay and Cancellation Summary Table.*

Hearing	Type	Recom.	Status	OMS Reason	Offender/NPB Comments
2007-04-01	Day Parole	N/A	Postponed	N/A	Investigate support from community CRF
2007-05-01	Day Parole	N/A	Postponed	Programs not completed	To complete family violence program
2007-09-01	Day Parole	N/A	Postponed	Case preparation incomplete	"My correctional plan progress has just gone to the community parole office for a community strategy. An assessment for decision will not be ready in time for the September hearing's cut off in August. (NPB - awaiting A4D)"
2007-10-01	Day Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other	Lawyer not available
2007-10-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	Other	Lawyer not available
2007-11-01	Day Parole	Deny	Postponed	Programs not completed	NPB - To complete programming
2007-11-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	Programs not completed	NPB - To complete programming
2007-12-01	Day Parole	Deny	Postponed	Programs not completed	NPB - Awaiting program report
2007-12-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	Programs not completed	NPB - Awaiting program report
2008-03-01	Day Parole	Deny	Postponed	Avoid negative recommendation &/or decision	N/A
2008-03-01	Full Parole	Deny	Postponed	Avoid negative recommendation &/or decision	N/A

Note: Alternate colour bars represent hearing dates.

Case E. This first-time federal offender was serving an eight year term for manslaughter. He accounted for 12 withdrawals, postponements, and waivers in his seven scheduled appearances before the Board. He had been granted Escorted Temporary Absences (ETAs) as well as

Unescorted Temporary Absences (UTAs). It is unclear whether the offender was supported by his PO/CMT for a day parole release. From the reports on file, it appears as though the offender wanted to continue with an ongoing UTA before requesting a day or full parole release.

Table 21. *Case E Delay and Cancellation Summary Table.*

Hearing	Type	Recom.	Status	OMS Reasons	Offender/NPB Comments
2007-11-01	Full Parole	N/A	Postponed	N/A	Incomplete paperwork (NPB comment)
2007-12-01	Day Parole	N/A	Postponed	N/A	Complete ETA (NPB comment)
2007-12-01	Full Parole	N/A	Postponed	Case prep. incomplete	Incomplete paperwork
2008-02-01	Day Parole	N/A	Postponed	N/A	Obtain community support (NPB comment)
2008-02-01	Full Parole	N/A	Postponed	N/A	Obtain community support (NPB comment)
2008-04-01	Day Parole	N/A	Postponed	N/A	No community support (NPB comment)
2008-04-01	Full Parole	N/A	Postponed	N/A	No community support (NPB comment)
2008-07-01	Day Parole	N/A	Postponed	N/A	Complete UTAs (NPB comment)
2008-07-01	Full Parole	N/A	Postponed	N/A	Complete UTAs (NPB comment)
2008-10-01	Day Parole	N/A	Postponed	N/A	N/A
2008-10-01	Full Parole	N/A	Waived	N/A	N/A
2009-03-01	Day Parole	N/A	Withdrawn	N/A	N/A

Note: Alternate colour bars represent hearing dates.

The five cases reviewed above illustrate well the impact of double-counts of delays and cancellations for parole hearings. That is, in some instances, a delay and/or cancellation is noted for one scheduled parole hearing where the Board will review both a day and full parole release. Implications for reporting both day and full parole delays and cancellations are discussed briefly in the following section.

These case studies also provide a useful perspective on the range of reasons contributing

to multiple, consecutive delays. Instances where the same or similar reasons result in several hearings being rescheduled suggest that a lengthier delay may have been appropriate.

Discussion

This research follows a study by Cabana and colleagues (2009) examining parole review waivers, withdrawals, and postponements and focuses on a relatively small group of offenders that accounted for over one-quarter of all delays and cancellations in FY 2007/08 and 2008/09. The aim of this study was to determine if and how high volume users differ from low volume users as well as to explore potential factors that could explain the causes of multiple delays and cancellations.

As would be expected based on the legislative and policy guidelines for each type of delay or cancellation, the low volume user group was more likely to waive a parole review whereas the high volume users were more likely to postpone a review. A comparison of offender characteristics revealed few statistically significant differences based on gender, sentence length, offence type and institutional behaviour, between offenders with multiple delays and cancellations and those with three or fewer decisions.

The findings did however suggest that Aboriginal offenders were slightly less likely than non-Aboriginal offenders to have multiple delays or cancellations. This finding is consistent with prior research suggesting that, in comparison to non-Aboriginal offenders, Aboriginal offenders have higher rates of waiver and withdrawals while non-Aboriginal offenders tend to have higher rates of postponements (Cabana et al., 2009). As discussed previously, a waiver or cancellation of a parole review typically implies that a subsequent review will not be scheduled until the legislated two year timeframe, thus reducing the likelihood of additional parole review delays within that period.

Reasons for the waivers, postponements and withdrawals of parole application, as coded in the reasons categories in OMS, suggest that delays or cancellations for high volume users were less often linked to incomplete programs than for low volume users. This finding is easier to interpret when reasons were examined based on delay and cancellation type. A greater proportion of delays and cancellations due to incomplete programs involved waivers rather than postponements or withdrawals. Again, since this OMS variable is poorly defined, it is difficult to definitively speak to the relationship between incomplete programs and parole review delays and

cancellations, however, research is currently underway to examine this issue more closely.

Differences between the reasons reported for waivers and postponements suggest that postponements occur under circumstances where factors having a potential impact on the Board's release decision are unresolved (e.g., community support, incomplete program, or a pending court decision) and most importantly, are expected to be resolved within a certain delay. These circumstances represent a difficult challenge in estimating an appropriate time delay that ensures the offender's timely appearance before the Board for a conditional release review while also ensuring that all necessary factors are in place (e.g., reports completed and submitted to the Board), and that the offender is prepared for this review. Rather than being indicative of characteristics that distinguish low and high volume users, in certain instances multiple postponements may reflect inaccurate or optimistic estimates of the time required to resolve factors important to the review process. This raises important questions as to the appropriate length of time for parole review delays necessary to ensure a just but efficient process. Future research by the National Parole Board could examine trends and regional differences in time delays requested and approved for postponements as well as to assess whether current time delays, as recommended in policy, are sufficient or whether more appropriate timeframes should be considered to reduce the need for multiple consecutive delays.

Regional differences in waiver, postponements and withdrawal trends were reported by Cabana et al. (2009) and were also noted in the context of the present study. For example, this study found that the Quebec and Pacific regions had a higher proportion of high compared to low volume users. In some regions, CSC and NPB have made concerted efforts to address the number of waivers and postponements (Cabana et al., 2009). For example, NPB staff members in the Atlantic region take part in institutional visits to improve communication between CSC and NPB, particularly pertaining to the information sharing process. Although findings from the present study support previous research indicating regional differences, it is not possible at this time to make a direct link between any informal initiatives that were implemented and delay and cancellation trends. An assessment of these initiatives in terms of their impact on waivers, postponements and withdrawals rates would provide a better indication of strategies that are both effective and worthwhile.

This study reinforces research indicating the need to better track and record reasons for waivers, postponements and withdrawals. Given this fact, there is no single response or strategy

that will successfully reduce the number of waivers, postponements and withdrawals. However, improving the way in which these decisions are monitored and reported may provide a more accurate representation of the factors contributing to challenges in meeting parole review eligibility dates. This research also underscores the need to consider the inflation that results from double counts of parole hearings. As demonstrated by the five case examples, delay and cancellation rates rise quickly when two decisions are counted for every scheduled review that did not take place. Waiver, postponement and withdrawal rates are frequently reported in terms of full parole reviews only, removing the risk of misinterpreting and overstating this issue. This, however, means that information pertaining to the delay of an offender's appearance before the Board for the review of a day parole release is not represented. Accurately capturing all pertinent reasons for delays and cancellation of conditional release reviews in official CSC and NPB reports and publications would enable policymakers, stakeholders, and offender advocates to better understand the true number of these delays and cancellations, and develop strategies targeted to the specific needs of different regions and institutions.

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Appendix A

Delays and Cancellations Definitions (Commissioner's Directive 712-1)

Delays (includes NPB parole reviews that are postponed, adjourned, or administratively adjourned):

- A **postponement** is a delay of the review or hearing, at the request of the offender, at any time before it begins.
- **Administrative adjournment** is a term used by the NPB to refer to the situation where a decision is taken “in office” to adjourn a case because one or more of the required reports are not available at the NPB office 21 days prior to the scheduled hearing.
- An **adjournment** is a temporary suspension of a hearing or review after the Board members have begun reviewing the information presented for their decision.

Cancellations (includes NPB parole reviews that are waived or withdrawn):

- A **waiver** is a written declaration given voluntarily by an offender that explicitly relinquishes the offender's legal right to a hearing and/or a review by the NPB.
- A **withdrawal** is a voluntary request from an offender advising the NPB that he or she no longer wishes to be reviewed for a day or full parole review as indicated by his or her earlier application.