



Research at a glance

Releases of Men Offenders Classified as Medium and Maximum Security

Offenders released from higher levels of security and at statutory release return to custody more frequently. Not surprisingly, these offenders are higher risk and less engaged in their correctional plan; however, they also have fewer opportunities to cascade to lower security levels and be considered for parole.

Why we did this study

In recent years, the percentage of men offenders released at their statutory release dates has been increasing, and many of these releases occur from medium and maximum security institutions. This study was undertaken to follow up on these patterns both by examining the risks associated with release directly from medium- and maximum-security institutions and by exploring the factors that may be associated with not being granted parole and with not cascading to a minimum-security institution prior to release.

What we did

Analyses included all 4,455 male offenders released on day or full parole, or on statutory release, in fiscal year 2013-14. Of these, most were classified as minimum (45%) or medium (49%) security at release. Analyses focused on comparing the groups of offenders using administrative data. In addition, thematic analyses were used to analyze data in narrative security review and parole recommendation assessments.

What we found

Offenders released from higher levels of security had higher rates of suspensions, revocations, and re-offences. These differences remained present when accounting for release type and release conditions. In other words, results aligned with previous findings that offenders released from higher levels of security were more likely to return to custody, even after accounting for certain offender differences.

Offenders statutorily-released from different security levels differed importantly even at intake, suggesting that many differences were present prior to their periods of incarceration rather than developed while in custody. Offenders classified as medium or maximum security at release and those who were statutorily released were consistently higher risk, less engaged in their correctional plan,

less motivated and less accountable. They also had more institutional misbehaviour and lacked insight or responsibility regarding their offence and/or offence history.

Perhaps more interesting, however, were findings relating to opportunities missed or not taken. Over a third (38%) of offenders statutorily-released while classified as medium or maximum security did not undergo a security classification review potentially due to the short length of their sentence. Moreover, a considerable number of offenders classified as medium and maximum security waived or withdrew their opportunities to be considered for discretionary release.

What it means

Overall, these findings suggest that it is not only characteristics of offenders that are contributing to these release patterns but also opportunities missed or not taken. As such, further attention in this area may be fruitful in terms of facilitating the development of action plans to facilitate the transfer of offenders to minimum security prior to their release.

For more information

Gobeil, R., Cousineau, C., Power, J., & Stewart, L. (2015). *Releases of offenders classified as medium and maximum security*. (Research Report R-376). Ottawa, Ontario: Correctional Service of Canada.

To obtain a PDF version of the full report, or for other inquiries, please e-mail the [Research Branch](#) or contact us by phone at (613) 995-3975.

You can also visit the [Research Publications](#) section for a full list of reports and one-page summaries

