



# Research Snippet

## Dangerous Offender Designations: A Five-Year Offence Profile

**KEY WORDS:** *Dangerous Offender (DO), Criminal Code Section 753, Tackling Violent Crime Act*

### What we looked at

Section 753 of the *Criminal Code* contains criteria by which an individual may be designated a Dangerous Offender (DO). Offenders given this designation have committed and/or are considered at high risk to commit serious personal injury offences. The courts can impose either an indeterminate or determinate period of incarceration. DOs with indeterminate sentences are supervised by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) indefinitely, while DOs with determinate sentences may be subject to long term supervision following release into the community.

Data were collected from end-of-year 2004 to end-of-year 2008 for offenders with a Dangerous Offender designation and the offence-related characteristics of this population were examined.

### What we found

The number of offenders with Dangerous Offender designations has increased by 20% in the five years from 2004 to 2008, compared to an approximate 8% increase in the total offender population during the same time.

The five most serious major offences on sentencing were Sexual Offences (e.g., *break and enter and commit sexual assault, sexual interference, sexual assault causing bodily harm*), Serious Assaults (e.g., *cause bodily harm to wound, aggravated assault*), Homicide (e.g., *first- or second-degree murder, manslaughter*), Attempted Murder, and Robbery (including armed robbery). These five offence categories accounted for over 90% of all DO major offences at sentencing.

Sexual offences consistently represent the highest proportion of major offences at sentencing for Dangerous Offenders, although this proportion has decreased slightly over the last five years.

Since the introduction of the Dangerous Offender legislation in 1997, the number of DOs increased by an average of 24 each year. As of Dec. 31, 2008, there were 452 active cases (this number includes some offenders designated under old legislation, such as the Habitual Offenders Act). Most of these offenders (409) were incarcerated on that date.

### What it means

Historically, Dangerous Offenders have had little opportunity for release and so were incarcerated for extended periods of time. Legislative changes in 2008 introduced determinate sentencing options for some DOs, increasing their opportunity for conditional release. Due to the recency of the legislation, it is unclear how these changes will affect CSC in terms of institutional programming, effective risk-management strategies, and community supervision. In order to address these issues, the Service will continue to monitor the changing profile of this population.

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Offence	End-Of-Year				
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Sexual	76.8%	74.7%	73.7%	73.2%	71.9%
Serious Assault	6.9%	7.8%	8.4%	9.9%	10.4%
Homicide	5.6%	6.1%	6.3%	6.0%	6.2%
Attempted Murder	2.9%	3.3%	3.4%	3.2%	3.1%
Robbery & Other	7.7%	8.1%	8.2%	7.8%	8.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>452</b>

