

U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons
Office of Research and Evaluation

RESEARCH BULLETIN

Federal Prisoners With a History of Violence

INTRODUCTION

Experience has shown that an inmate's potential to behave violently corresponds with previous incidents of violence. Consequently, knowing the "history of violence" of the inmates in each institution could assist managers to develop strategies that will improve institution operations. Using data from the May 31, 1988, SENTRY extract, this *Research Bulletin* identifies the overall percentage of Federal prisoners with a history of violence and the percentage of such inmates at each institution.

For this *Bulletin*, the phrase "history of violence" was defined in the following three ways based on the inmate's current offense and other background indicators of violence taken from items on the security and custody classification forms:

- Definition 1 — Includes inmates whose current conviction is for offenses involving homicide, rape, assault, kidnapping, and robbery.
- Definition 2 — Includes inmates whose current convictions include the offenses listed above plus crimes involving

arson, firearms, explosives, extortion, selected national defense violations, sex offenses, air piracy, and threats against the President.

- Definition 3 — Includes inmates currently committed for offenses included in Definition 2 and other background indicators of violence, including incidents where the inmate was found "guilty" by a court or an institution disciplinary committee. Examples of historical indicators of violence include simple and aggravated assault, domestic squabbles, fights, incidents involving arson or explosives, and intimidation involving a weapon.

HIGHLIGHTS

Table 1 presents information concerning the number and percent of sentenced inmates with a history of violence for the Bureau as a whole.

Overall, 23 percent of Bureau inmates are incarcerated for Definition 1 offenses. Under this definition, 23 percent of all males and 12 percent of all females have a history of violence.

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Under Definition 2, the percentage of Federal prisoners classified as violent increases to 29 percent overall. Under this definition, 30 percent of all males and 14 percent of all females have a history of violence. Using Definition 3, 46 percent of Federal inmates can be considered violent. Under this definition, 48 percent of all males and 24 percent of all females have a history of violence.

As might be expected, the percentage of violent inmates increases as the definition of violence is broadened to include additional offenses. Most notably, there is a 17-percent increase in the number of violent offenders when Definition 3 criteria are added to Definition 2. A higher percentage of males than females have violent histories.

Table 2 lists the percent of inmates at each institution and by security level who are considered violent under Definition 3. Overall, the percent of violent inmates increases as the security level increases. The percent of violent inmates increases from 15 percent at level 1 institutions to 98 percent at Marion, the only level 6 institution.

If you have any questions about the contents of this *Bulletin*, contact Harriet Lebowitz or Evan Gilman at FTS 724-3118.

Table 1. Percent of the Sentenced Federal Prison Population with a History of Violence

	Total	Males	Females
	(38,636*)	(36,040)	(2,596)
Definition 1** . . .	23% (8,711)	23% (8,409)	12% (302)
Definition 2	29% (11,207)	30% (10,842)	14% (365)
Definition 3	46% (17,903)	48% (17,279)	24% (624)

* Sentenced population on 5/31/88.

** See page 1 for Definitions 1, 2, and 3.

**Table 2. Percent of Sentenced Federal Prison Population With
a History of Violence (Definition 3) by Security Level and Institution**

	Percent with violent history	Total sentenced population
SECURITY LEVEL 1	15% (1,535)	10,135
Allenwood	16% (129)	817
Atlanta Camp	25% (67)	267
Big Spring	12% (76)	642
Boron	12% (54)	452
Danbury Camp	19% (39)	208
Duluth	14% (95)	677
Eglin	8% (64)	834
El Reno Camp	18% (33)	187
Fort Worth	17% (127)	771
La Tuna Camp	22% (68)	303
Leavenworth Camp	15% (62)	422
Lewisburg Camp	18% (39)	217
Lexington	15% (172)	1,149
Lompoc Camp	15% (92)	618
Loretto	23% (116)	503
Marianna	14% (3)	22
Marion Camp	15% (32)	221
Montgomery	9% (68)	724
Oxford Camp	19% (27)	140
Petersburg Camp	24% (52)	214
Terre Haute Camp	20% (78)	399
Texarkana Camp	13% (32)	240
Tyndall	9% (10)	108
SECURITY LEVEL 2	26% (1,251)	4,842
Danbury	32% (349)	1,083
La Tuna	25% (225)	903

Table 2 (Continued)

	Percent with violent history	Total sentenced population
Safford	25% (97)	388
Sandstone	23% (173)	741
Seagoville	25% (176)	694
Tallahassee	22% (231)	1,033
SECURITY LEVEL 3	55% (3,211)	5,885
Ashland	48% (477)	1,001
Milan	61% (732)	1,196
Otisville	52% (342)	657
Ray Brook	55% (551)	996
Terminal Island	57% (414)	724
Texarkana	54% (527)	985
Tucson	52% (168)	326
SECURITY LEVEL 4	78% (5,568)	7,139
Bastrop	73% (469)	644
El Reno	73% (995)	1,359
Memphis	81% (689)	854
Oxford	86% (593)	686
Petersburg	83% (607)	731
Phoenix	77% (691)	897
Talladega	63% (464)	732
Terre Haute	86% (1,060)	1,236
SECURITY LEVEL 5	93% (3,303)	3,535
Leavenworth	96% (1,007)	1,051
Lewisburg	88% (1,144)	1,299
Lompoc	97% (1,152)	1,185
SECURITY LEVEL 6	98% (371)	379
Marion	98% (371)	379

Table 2 (Continued)

	Percent with violent history	Total sentenced population
ADMINISTRATIVE	40% (2,664)	6,721
Alderson	37% (301)	815
Atlanta Penitentiary	46% (285)	627
Butner	59% (442)	754
Chicago	31% (90)	289
Englewood	44% (242)	550
Miami	17% (62)	370
Morgantown	18% (83)	473
New York	12% (24)	197
Oakdale	25% (16)	64
Pleasanton	34% (230)	668
Rochester	49% (321)	660
San Diego	13% (38)	293
Springfield	55% (530)	961