

Oklahoma Reform Sex Offender Laws Fact Sheet on Sex Offender Recidivism

In considering sex offender recidivism, it is important to note that recidivism rates vary across studies as a result of differences in follow-up periods, local criminal practices, and the definition of recidivism. Additionally, different groups of sex offenders have different recidivism rates, and recidivism is based on a variety of factors such as the type of crime, number of prior arrests, and length of time after release from prison. Thus, a single recidivism rate cannot accurately be applied to all sex offenders. The data below were compiled from five studies of sex offense recidivism.

- A meta-analysis of 61 studies found that on average, the sex offense recidivism rate was **13.4%** overall, **18.9%** for rapists, and **12.7%** for child molesters. When recidivism was defined as any reoffense, the rates were higher: 36.3% overall, 46.2% for rapists, and 36.9% for child molesters [1].
- A nine year study of sex offender recidivism by the New York Department of Corrections found that the **rate of return to prison** for a **new sex crime** was **6%** [2].
- In a 15 year study, only **27%** were **charged with** or convicted of a sexual offense [3].

Several studies show that **most sex recidivism occurs within the first three years after release**. According to a 10 year study of released sex offenders in Ohio, of all the sex offenders who recidivated (returned to prison) for a new sex offense, **1/2 did so within 2 years, and 2/3 within 3 years** [4]. Another study states that the longer offenders remain offence-free in the community the less likely they are to sexually recidivate [3]. Thus, lengthy post incarceration supervision may have rapidly diminishing returns relative to the cost.

The same 10 year Ohio study found that the sex offender recidivism (reincarceration) rate for **all types of crime** was **34%**. The total **sex-related recidivism rate**, was **11.0%** [4].

Also in the Ohio study, recidivism rates differed based on victim typology [4].

Sex offender type	Sex recidivism
Rapists – adult victims	17.5%
Child Molesters – extrafamilial	8.7%
Child Molesters – incest	7.4%

According to the US Department of Justice, recidivism rates vary with the definition of recidivism, but remain low. In a 3 year study tracking 9,961 released sex offenders:

- **5.3%** were **rearrested** for a new **sex crime**.
- **3.5%** were **reconvicted** for a new **sex crime**.
- **24%** were **reconvicted** for a new offense including **all types of crimes**.
- **2.2%** were **rearrested** for a **sex crime against a child**.
- **3.3%** of *child molesters* were **rearrested** for a new **sex crime against a child** [5].

(Reference list on page 2)

References Cited

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