

How likely are those listed on the Sex Offense Registry to re-offend?

Myth: Most people who have been convicted of a sexual crime **will** re-offend.

Fact: People convicted of a sexual crime **seldom** repeat the offense.

Even though reoffense rates vary among different types of sex offenders, recidivism rates are lower than for the general criminal population.

Most new sex offenses are committed by someone who is **not** on the sex offense registry.

95.88% of arrests for all registerable sex crimes are of persons previously non-convicted of a sex offense.

95.94% of arrests for rape are of previous non-sex-offenders.

94.12% of arrests for child molestation are of previous non-sex-offenders.

(Sandler, Jeffrey C, et. Al., Does a Watched Pot Boil? A Time-Series Analysis of New York State's Sex Offender Registration and Notification Law. Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 2008 Vol. 14, No. 4, 290)

A Common but Unfortunate Consequence: If you state something over and over again, even though it is not the **truth**, people will eventually believe it.

“There has been research that shows recidivism rates for individuals who have committed sexual offenses are *lower* than those of other crimes.”

*Laura Palumbo, Communications Director for National Sexual Violence Resource Center,
A Victim’s Advocacy Organization
thecrimereport.org/2019/02/19/miami-dade-sex-offenders-forced-to-be-homeless*

“Sex offense recidivism rates are much *lower* than commonly believed. The best estimates suggest that 5-14% of known sex offenders will commit a subsequent sex crime within three to six years, and after 15 years, three-quarters will *not have recidivated*. These recidivism rates are far lower than those for other types of criminals.”

*Sex offense recidivism, risk assessment, and the Adam Walsh Act Jill S. Levenson, Ph.D., LCSW
http://www.leg.state.vt.us/workGroups/sexoffenders/AWA_SORNsummary.pdf*

National U.S. Recidivism (Re-Offense) Rates for Criminal Offenses, 3 years After Release

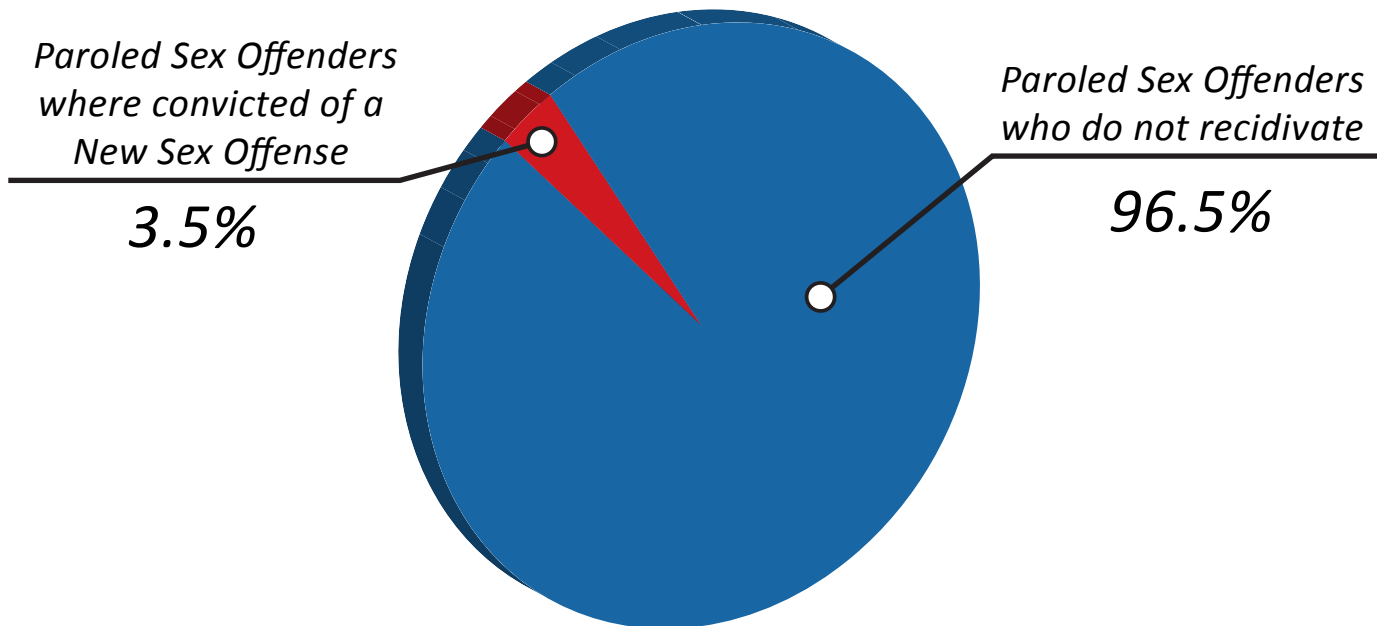
1. Vehicle Thefts, **78.8%***
2. Selling stolen property, **77.4%***
3. Burglary, **74%***
4. Larceny, **74.6%***
5. Possessing stolen weapons, **70.2%***
6. Robbery, **70.2%***
7. Domestic Battery, **41%****
8. Drugs, **27%***
9. Rape **2.5%*** / Sexual Assault or Rape **5.3%****
10. Murder **1.2%***

* - 2002 [U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics](#)

** - 2003 U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics

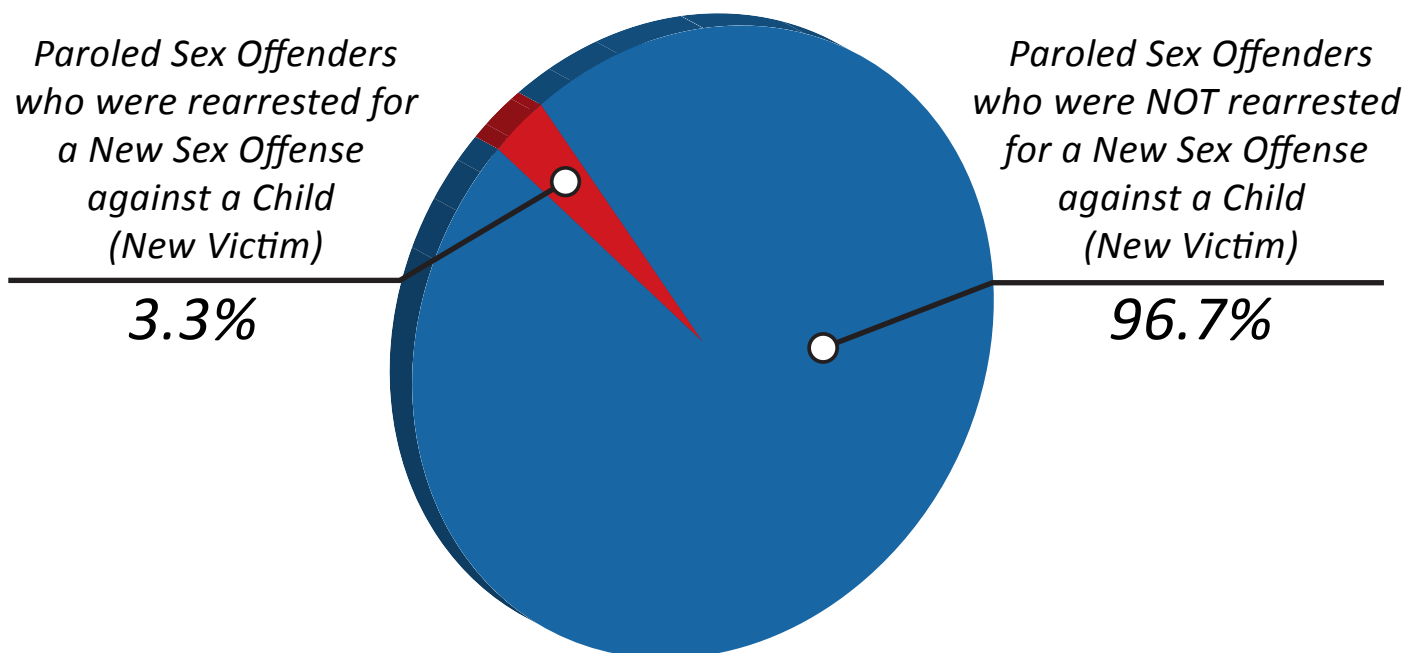
** - 2000 Edward Gondolf, [Reassault at 30-Months after Batterer Program Intake](#), 44 Int'l J. of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology

Dept. Of Justice: Recidivism Rates: All Released Sex Offenders in 1994 (9,691)



Source (Pub 2003): "Recidivism of Sex Offenders Released from Prison in 1994" (NCJ 198281)

Dept. Of Justice: Recidivism of Sex Offenders Paroled whose PAST victim was a minor (4,295)



Source (Pub 2003): "Recidivism of Sex Offenders Released from Prison in 1994" (NCJ 198281)

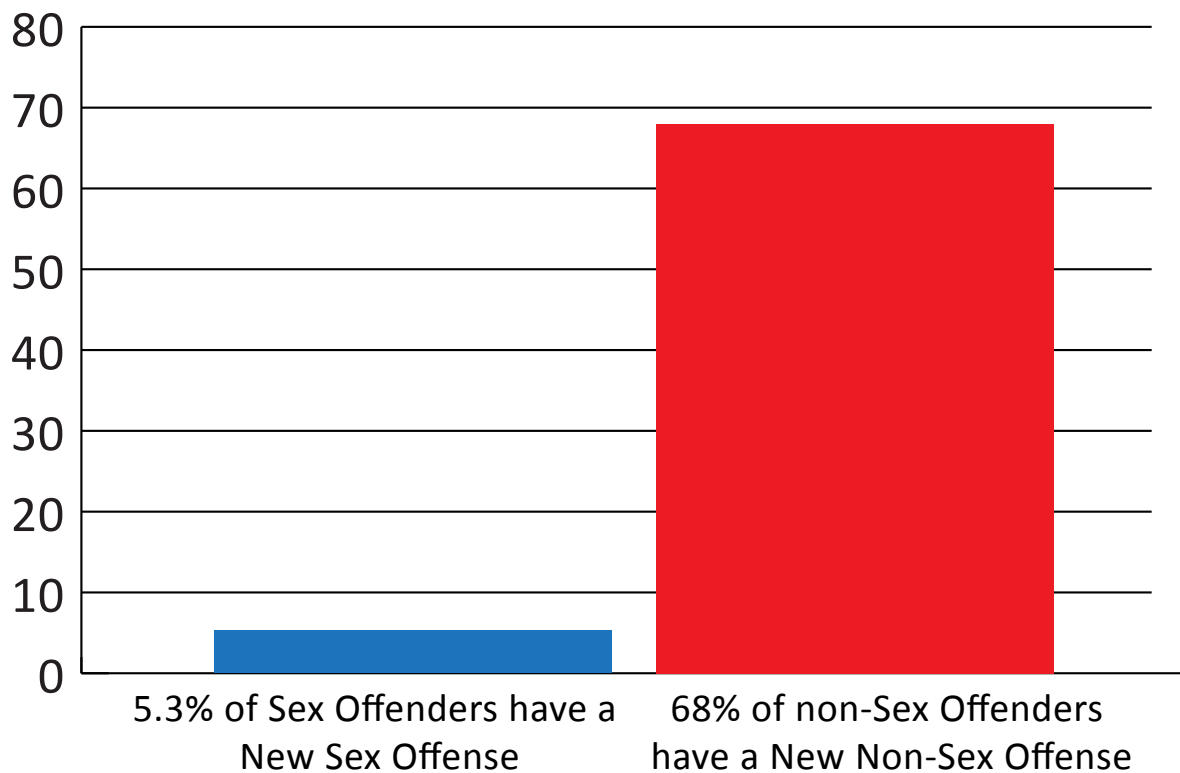
MYTH 1: PEOPLE WHO HAVE COMMITTED SEX OFFENSES ARE LIKELY TO RE-OFFEND.

Does a sex offender have a greater chance of re-offending with a new sex offense as compared to the chance of a non-sex offender re-offending with a non-sex offense?

To answer this question, you have to come up with two numbers: the percentage of sex offenders released from prison who commit a new sex offense and percentage of non-sex offenders released from prison who commit a new non-sex offense. Do you have those two numbers in mind? Good. Here is what the research says.

In a longitudinal research study, the United States government studied 9,691 sex offenders and 262,420 non-sex offenders released in 1994 from state prisons in fifteen states, including Texas (Langan, Schmitt, & Durose; 2003). In the three year follow-up period, 5.3% of the sex offenders were arrested for a new sex crime and 68% of the non-sex offenders were arrested for a new non-sex offense.

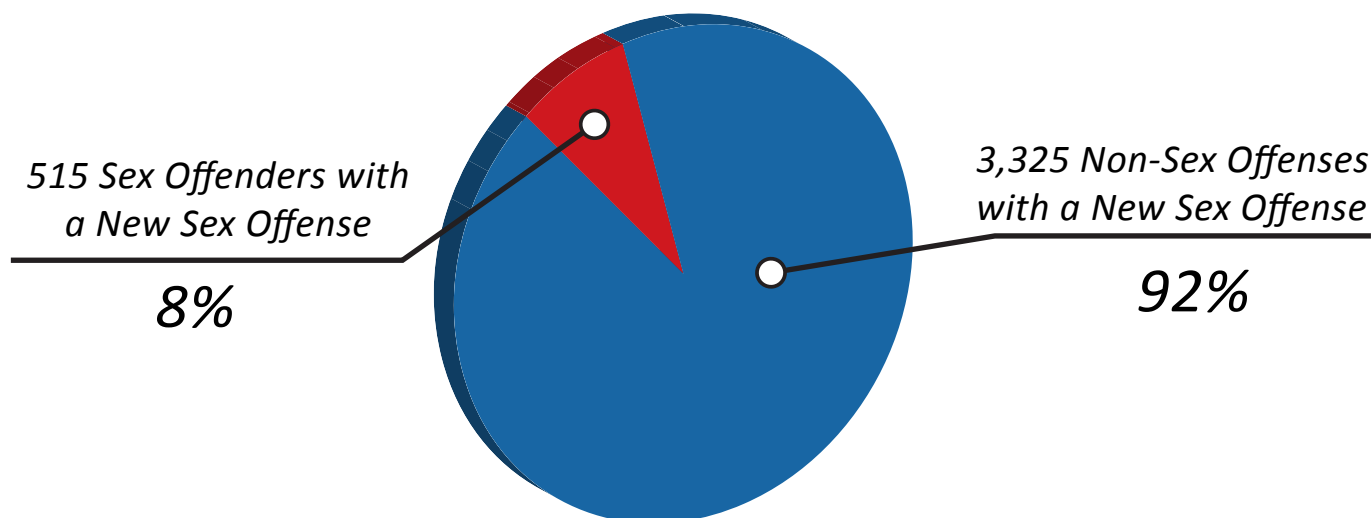
Recidivism with the same type of Offense



MYTH 2 : SEX OFFENDERS RELEASED FROM PRISON PRODUCE MORE SEX OFFENSES COMPARED TO NON-SEX OFFENDERS RELEASED FROM PRISON.

Using the same study conducted by the United States government as above, you can uncover the truth about this second myth. In this study, 517 sex offenders were arrested for a new sex offense and 3,328 “non-sex” offenders were arrested for a new sex offense. In other words, 92% of new sex offenses are individuals released from prison with no prior sexual offense history and 8% of new sex offenses are caused by known sex offenders. This study shows that non-sex offenders are responsible for committing a greater number of new sex offenses as compared with known sex offenders. It’s no wonder that registration doesn’t work.

Sex Offenses by Sex Offenders and Non-Sex Offenders



Dr. Ferrara served as the clinical consultant and primary researcher in the Dynamic Risk Assessment study authorized by the Texas Legislature (HB 2036). The results of this research were used by the Council on Sex Offender Treatment to approve deregistration criteria and a deregistration process.

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<https://www.deregistertexas.com/scientific-studies-of-registration/>

RECIDIVISM STUDIES EXCERPTS

Sex Offender Recidivism after Release from Prison State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2015

The two core findings pertaining to lower rates of recidivism for sex offenders when compared to the overall offender population and the considerably low sexual recidivism rates have strong empirical support within the research literature. In fact, empirical studies comparing recidivism rates (particularly for convictions with a new sentence) of sex offenders and other offender groups commonly show lower general recidivism estimates for sex offenders. However, the manner in which a study calculates recidivism (e.g. arrest, reincarceration, or revocation) can also impact how sex offender rates compare to other offender groups. In fact, some research studies that calculate recidivism using arrest, reincarceration, or revocation, have found comparable or higher rates of recidivism for sex offenders compared to other groups. Nevertheless, when specifically examining sexual recidivism, the research literature predominantly shows very low rates for sex offenders (particularly in comparison to general recidivism rates), even at long follow-up periods (up to 15 years later).

<https://doc.wi.gov/DataResearch/RecidivismReincarceration/SexualOffenderRecidivismReport.pdf>

Paroling people who committed serious crimes: What is the actual risk? Citizens Alliance on Prisons & Public Spending December 1, 2014

Decades of research in Michigan and other jurisdictions shows:

- People who commit homicides or sex offenses have extremely low reoffense rates overall and almost never return to prison for committing a new crime of the same type. The fact that someone committed a very serious offense in the past does not mean they are currently a risk to the public.
- There is no evidence that keeping someone incarcerated longer increases public safety. This research is confirmed by the very low reoffense rates of Michigan homicide and sex offenders paroled from 2007 through the first quarter of 2010. More than 99 percent did not return to prison within three years with a new sentence for a similar offense.

https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/cappsmi/CAPPS_Paroling_people_who_committed_serious_crimes_11_23_14.pdf

RECIDIVISM STUDIES EXCERPTS

Recidivism among sex offenders in Connecticut

**State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management Criminal Justice Policy & Planning
Division February 15, 2012**

In 2005, 746 offenders who had served a prison sentence for a least one sex-related offense were released or discharged from prison. Over the next five years: 27 (3.6%) of these men were arrested and charged with a new sex crime. 20 (2.7%) were convicted for new sex offense, and 13 (1.7%) were returned to prison to serve a sentence for a new sex crime. The sexual recidivism rates for the 746 sex offenders released in 2005 are much lower than what many in the public have been led to expect or believe. These low re-offense rates appear to contradict a conventional wisdom that sex offenders have very high sexual re-offense rates. The real challenge for public agencies is to determine the level of risk which specific offenders pose the public.

http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/cjppd/cjresearch/recidivism-study/sex_offender_recidivism_2012_final.pdf

SEXUAL ASSAULT TRENDS AND SEX OFFENDER RECIDIVISM IN MAINE Maine Statistical Analysis Center USM Muskie School of Public Service, 2010

The data on sex offender state prison release recidivism suggest that sex offenders do not re-offend at significantly higher rates than other offenders. Of the 552 sex offender prisoners released from a state correctional facility since 2004, the one, two and three year reincarceration rates for a new crime was lower than other offenders, while technical violation rates were higher for the same period.

<https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/wpsites.maine.edu/dist/2/115/-files/2018/06/Sexual-Assault-Trends-and-Sex-Offender-Recidivism-in-Maine-201-24o3nu2.pdf>

Low Recidivism for Sexual Crimes

People convicted of a sexual crime seldom repeat the offense. Government reports and empirical studies consistently show the rate of repeated sex crime to be much lower than the general public believes. The most widely cited report was published by the U.S Department of Justice in 2003. It compared recidivism rates among prisoners released in 1994 over a three-year follow-up period. Sex offenders (SO's) were rearrested for another sex crime at a rate of 1.8% to 5.3% per year. Non-SO's were rearrested for ordinary crimes (burglary, robbery, drug dealing, etc) at a rate of 22.6% to 68% per year. SO's repeat their crime at a lower rate than any type of crime other than homicide. It is in that context that SO's are understood to be at low risk to re-offend.

Several other studies can be cited to illustrate the widespread understanding about the low recidivism rate among former sex offenders.

A) The pivotal meta-analysis by Hanson & Bussière (1998), from which the Static-99 actuarial scale was developed, found 13.4% of their 23,393 sample re-offended sexually within 5 years of release (approximately 3% per year).²

B) The Texas Criminal Justice Policy Council (1997) tracked SO's released from prison and found, after 3 years, 4% (1.3% per year) had returned to prison for another sex crime.³

C) The Washington State Institute for Public Policy found a 4-year recidivism rate of 2.7% (0.68% per year).⁴

D) The California Prison System, (Marques, et al, 2005) found, among 649 released SO's, a sexual recidivism rate of 23.1% over an average of 8.5 years (2.7% per year).⁵

E) A U.S. Department of Justice Report (Zgoba, et al, 2012) surveyed 4 states (FL, SC, NJ, MN) and found an average 10-year sex offense recidivism rate of 9.9% (0.99% per year).⁶

F) The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2012) reported that, during a 3-year period, 1.9% of sex offenders on the public registry (including both those who had been to prison and those who had not) were arrested for another sex crime – 0.63% per year.⁷

G) A Bureau of Justice report surveying 9 states (AK, AZ, DE, IL, IA, NM, SC, TN, & UT) found an average 3-year sex offense recidivism rate of 3.4% -- 1.1% per year.⁸

These statistics describe a broad, general category – sex offenders. There are important distinctions to be made between types of offenders that would show large segments at extremely low risk of recidivism. The reports cited here are representative of a large body of literature. These descriptive studies make it clear that the great majority of SO's have a very low likelihood of repeating their crime. **Legislation and policy making that assumes otherwise is misguided and counterproductive.**

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7. "2012 Outcome Evaluation Report," California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/adult_research_branch/Research_Documents/ARB_FY_0708_Recidivism_Report_10.23.12.pdf
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