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Department of Correctional Services

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INMATE ESCAPE INCIDENTS

2002 - 2006



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INMATE ESCAPE INCIDENTS

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This report provides descriptive information on incidents of inmate escape from New York State Department of Correctional Services facilities from the 2002 through 2006 time period. The report presents information on demographic characteristics, as well as the legal history of escapees. The analysis uses a series of variables to compare escapees with the general inmate population. The report is preceded by a brief summary of the main findings.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Number and Rate of Escapes Inmates

In the five-year period of 2002-2006, 18 inmates escaped from custody. Four inmates escaped in calendar year 2006 (see Table 1.1, p. 4).

2. Location of Escapes

Most escapees (72%, N=13) in the 2002-2006 time period were from minimum security facilities or inmates assigned to work details outside the security perimeter fence. There was one escape from secure custody while in transit in 2006 (see Table 1.2, p. 5).

3. Escapes by Facility Security Level

Over the time period 2002 through 2006, 28% (N=5) of escapes occurred at maximum security prisons, 6% (N=1) at medium security prisons, and 67% (N=12) at minimum security facilities (see Table 2.1, p.6).

4. Incarceration Offense

In 2006, two escapees were serving sentences for a drug offense, one escapee had been sentenced to prison for escape, and the fourth escapee was serving time for burglary (see Table 3.1, p. 7).

5. Age of Escapees

During the 2002-2006 time period, escapees were younger when compared to the inmate under custody population. Fifty-six percent of escapees were younger than 31 years old while 36% of the under custody population were younger than 31 years of age (see Table 4.2, p. 8).

6. Time Served Prior to Escape

Between the years of 2002 and 2006, 50% (N=9) of escapees had served less than two years of incarceration prior to their escape. In 2006, three (75%, N=3) inmates had served less than two years (see Table 7.1, p. 14).

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Correctional Services maintains specific information of escapes and, together with data files on under custody inmates, produces the annual department report on inmate escapes. The report profiles inmate escapees and the circumstances surrounding escape incidents for the previous five years. Characteristics of escapees are compared to the under custody population for the 2002 through 2006 time period.

There were 18 inmates who escaped during the 2002-2006 time period. Thirteen escapes involved minimum security inmates or inmates assigned to supervised work assignments outside their facility perimeters. The remaining five inmates escaped from a maximum security prison or while under direct supervision of a correctional officer in a community setting.

In 2006, four inmates escaped from custody. Two inmates escaped from minimum security facilities, one inmate escaped from a minimum security setting while assigned to a medium security prison, and one inmate assigned to a maximum security facility escaped while in transit. Appendix B presents a brief description of each escape incident.

Section One, Number of Inmate Escapes

In 2006, four inmates escaped in two separate incidents. During the five-year time period reviewed in this report, 18 inmates escaped from NYSDOCS custody.

The five-year total represents an average annual rate of .06 escapes per 1,000 inmates. The 2006 rate was .06 escapes per 1,000 inmates or one escaped inmate for every 15,683 inmate held under custody by NYSDOCS.

Table 1.1 presents data on the number and rate of escapes during the 2002-2006 time period. Rate data are used to measure the number of escaped inmates as a proportion of the inmate population. In this report rates are calculated as the number of escapees per 1,000 under custody inmates. Since the average inmate population may fluctuate higher or lower from year to year, the use of rate allows for standardized yearly comparisons.

Calendar Year	Number of Escapes	Rate per 1,000 Inmates
2002	4	0.06
2003	6	0.09
2004	2	0.03
2005	2	0.03
2006	4	0.06
Total	18	0.06

Escapes from Secure Custody

Most escapes occur at minimum custody facilities or from less secure areas outside the perimeter fence of medium or maximum security prisons. Additional escapes occur while inmates are on supervised work details providing services in communities, at state parks, or along state highways. Inmates assigned to less secure areas may escape from immediate custody by walking away and are commonly referred to as 'walkaways'. Walkaways do not have to use more elaborate methods necessary to escape from a higher security assignment.

Secure assignments include housing inside medium and maximum prisons and circumstances when an inmate is escorted by correctional officers to court or hospital. Table 1.2 shows five escapes (28%) from secure custody and 13 escapes (72%) from minimum security or less secure settings during the 2002-2006 time period. An examination of escapes from less secure settings reveals that one was a walkaway from a medium security facility assignment outside of the perimeter fence and 12 involved inmates assigned to minimum security facilities.

Table 1.2, Frequency and Rate of Escapes from Secure and Less Secure Custody, 2002 - 2006

Year	Escapes from Secure Custody		Escapes from Minimum Security or Walkaway	
	N	Rate	N	Rate
2002	1	0.01	3	0.04
2003	2	0.03	4	0.06
2004	0	0	2	0.03
2005	1	0.02	1	0.02
2006	1	0.02	3	0.05
Total	5	0.02	13	0.04

Section Two, Escapes by Facility Security Level

New York State correctional facilities are classified as maximum, medium or minimum security. This designation is based upon the physical characteristics of each facility that enable the Department to safely and securely house inmates. Several criteria are taken into consideration in the determination of the security classification: **perimeter** - the type of enclosure surrounding the inmates within a correctional facility; **internal control** - the capacity to isolate internal areas of a prison through the use of control gates; **housing** - the type of occupied units ranging from individual cells with remote controlled locks to open barracks-type housing; **special housing** - the need to securely control and isolate disruptive individuals from the general inmate population; and **operational configuration** - the ability to monitor and control inmate movement and interaction within the facility.

Table 2.1 reveals the housing security level of inmates who escaped from custody in the years from 2002 through 2006. As indicated in the table, 67% (N=12) of the escapees were in minimum security institutions. Three inmates assigned to maximum security facilities escaped while outside of prison; in 2002, 2005, and 2006, maximum security inmates escaped from community hospitals. See Appendix B, page 14, for details of escapes from 2002 to 2006.

Security Level	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
Maximum	1	2	0	1	1	5	28%
Medium	0	0	0	0	1	1	6%
Minimum	3	4	2	1	2	12	67%
Total	4	6	2	2	4	18	100%

Section Three, Commitment Offense of Escapees

The most serious commitment crime for each escaped inmate is shown in Table 3.1. The commitment offenses for year 2006 escapees were burglary, drug offenses, and escape.

The commitment offense for all inmates in custody of the Department of Correctional Services is compared with escaped inmates in Table 3.2. Noteworthy are the percentage differences between the under custody population and the escapee population in the offense types of stolen property and robbery offenses. Compared to the under custody population, escapees were more likely to be convicted of stolen property (11% vs. 1%) and less likely to be convicted of robbery (6% vs. 18%).

Table 3.1, Commitment Offense Type by Year of Escape
Inmate Escapees, 2002 - 2006

Crime	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
Murder	1	2	0	1	0	4	22%
Other Homicide	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Sex Offense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Robbery	0	0	0	1	0	1	6%
Assault	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Burglary	0	1	0	0	1	2	11%
Weapon Offense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Grand Larceny	0	1	0	0	0	1	6%
Drug Offense	1	1	1	0	2	5	28%
Stolen Property	1	0	1	0	0	2	11%
Forgery	1	0	0	0	0	1	6%
DWI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Youthful Off.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Other Felony	0	1	0	0	1	2	11%
Total	4	6	2	2	4	18	100%

Table 3.2, Commitment Offense of Escapees and Under Custody Pop.
2002 - 2006

Crime	Escapees	Under Custody
Murder	22%	14%
Other Homicide	0%	5%
Sex Offense	0%	8%
Robbery	6%	18%
Assault	0%	6%
Burglary	11%	9%
Weapon Offense	0%	4%
Grand Larceny	6%	2%
Drug Offense	28%	26%
Stolen Property	11%	1%
Forgery	6%	1%
DWI	0%	1%
Youthful Offender	0%	1%
Other Felony	11%	4%
Total	100.0%	100%

Section Four, Age and Race/Ethnicity of Escapees

Table 4.1 displays the age of escaped inmates for the 2002-2006 time period. Table 4.2 compares the age of escaped inmates with the under custody population during the 2002-2006 time period. Proportionately, a larger percentage of escapees are younger than inmates in the under custody population during the last five years; 56% of the escapees were under 31 years of age while 36% of the under custody inmates were less than 31 years of age. Nearly equal percentages of escapees and under custody population exist in the 31-40 age group, but the percentage of escapees over 40 years old is significantly less when compared to the under custody population (6% versus 30%).

Age in Years	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
< 21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
21-30	2	3	2	1	2	10	56%
31-40	2	3	0	1	1	7	39%
41-50	0	0	0	0	1	1	6%
> 51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	4	6	2	2	6	18	100%

Age	Escapees	Under Custody
< 21	0%	4%
21-30	56%	32%
31-40	39%	33%
41-50	6%	22%
>50	0%	8%
Total	100%	100%

Race/Ethnicity of Escapees

During the five years of 2002 through 2006, 44% (N=8) of escaped inmates were White, 28% (N=5) African-American, and 28% (N=5) Hispanic (See Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 presents information on the race ethnic status of the under custody population and escapees for the time period 2002-2006. Comparisons between race/ethnicity of escapees and under custody population for the five-year time period reveal that 44% of escapees were White as compared to 18% of the total inmate population; 28% of escapees were African-American compared to 50% in the under custody population; and, 28% of escapees were Hispanic compared to 29% of the under custody population. Escapees were more likely to be White when compared with the overall under custody population.

Race/Ethnic	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
White	2	5	0	0	1	8	44%
African-American	0	0	1	2	2	5	28%
Hispanic	2	1	1	0	1	5	28%
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	4	6	2	2	4	18	100%

Race/Ethnic	Escapees	Under Custody
White	44%	18%
African-American	28%	50%
Hispanic	28%	29%
Other	0%	2%
Total	100%	100%

Section Five, Prior Adult Convictions

Table 5.1 shows prior adult convictions for the escapee population. Inmates are categorized according to the most serious prior criminal record (i.e., a felony conviction is more serious than a misdemeanor conviction which in turn is treated as more serious than no prior conviction). For example, consider the case of an inmate convicted of a misdemeanor DWI in 1993, a felony offense of burglary in 1995, and a felony of armed robbery in 2003 for which he received a prison sentence. For purposes of this discussion and Table 5.1, the most serious prior offense was the felony burglary; the 2003 armed robbery is the commitment offense for which the inmate is currently serving a prison sentence. Since the burglary felony is more serious than a misdemeanor of DWI, only the felony is reported as the most serious prior conviction. Table 5.1 reveals that 78% (N=14) of the escapees between 2002 and 2006 had been convicted of at least one prior felony offense. Six percent of the escapees (N=1) did not have any prior convictions while 17% (N=3) had a prior misdemeanor conviction.

Prior Adult Commitments

Table 5.2 shows prior jail and prison commitments for the 18 inmates who escaped during the 2002-2006 period; only the most serious level of commitment is shown for each inmate. Thirty-nine percent of escapees had a previous prison incarceration.

Table 5.1, Most Serious Prior Adult Criminal Conviction Inmate Escapees, 2002 - 2006							
Prior Conviction	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
None	0	0	0	1	0	1	6%
Misdemeanor	0	1	1	1	0	3	17%
Felony	4	5	1	0	4	14	78%
Total	4	6	2	2	4	18	100%

Table 5.2, Most Serious Prior Adult Criminal Commitment Inmate Escapees, 2002 - 2006							
Prior Commitment	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
None	0	0	0	1	0	1	6%
Jail	4	4	1	1	0	10	56%
Prison	0	2	1	0	4	7	39%
Total	4	6	2	2	4	18	100%

Section Six, Sentence Length

The New York State Penal Law stipulates that either an indeterminate sentence or determinate sentence may be imposed upon convicted felony offenders sentenced to the state correctional system. An indeterminate sentence includes a range of years, a minimum and maximum time period, which an inmate may serve. In general, the minimum sentence is the least amount of time an inmate will serve before eligibility for parole. The maximum sentence is the longest amount of time an inmate can serve prior to release from custody of the Department of Correctional Services. The structure of the minimum and maximum sentence range varies according to prior felony convictions and crime classification.

Determinate sentencing is imposed upon second felony offenders convicted of a violent felony offense committed after October 1, 1995; first felony offenders convicted of a violent felony offense committed after September 1, 1998; and, drug offenders for an offense committed after January 13, 2005. The sentence consists of a specified number of years and the offender may be considered for parole after serving 6/7 of his sentence. For purposes of this report, the 6/7 time period is considered the minimum sentence for determinately sentenced inmates.

Aggregate Minimum Sentence

Table 6.1 shows the aggregate minimum sentence of escapees for the years 2002-2006. An examination of the table reveals that most prison escapees were serving relatively short minimum sentences. One-third of inmates who escaped had less than a two-year minimum sentence and 61% were serving a minimum sentence of less than four years.

Aggregate Min. Sentence	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
< 2 Years	1	2	2	1	0	6	33%
2 Years	1	0	0	0	0	1	6%
3 Years	1	1	0	0	2	4	22%
4-5 Years	0	1	0	0	2	3	17%
6-9 Years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
10-14 Years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
15-19 Years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
20 Years +	1	2	0	1	0	4	22%
Total	4	6	2	2	4	18	100%

Table 6.2 compares the minimum sentence of escaped inmates with the under custody population for the years 2002-2006 and it shows that a larger percent of escapees were serving shorter minimum sentences. Thirty-nine percent of escapees were serving a minimum sentence of less than three years as compared to only 27% of the under custody population for the same five-year period. A partial explanation for the difference is that inmates committed to prison for less serious offenses and serving shorter sentences may be assigned to minimum security facilities which allow more opportunity for escape. Inmates committed for more serious offenses and longer sentences are more likely to be housed in maximum security prisons.

Table 6.2, Aggregate Minimum Sentence of Escapees and Under Custody Population, 2002 - 2006

Aggregate Minimum	Escapees 2000-2006	Under Custody 2000-2006
< 2 Years	33%	13%
2 Years	6%	14%
3 Years	22%	12%
4-5 Years	17%	16%
6-9 Years	0%	18%
10-14 Years	0%	9%
15-19 Years	0%	6%
20 Years +	22%	13%
Total	100%	100%

Aggregate Maximum Sentence

Table 6.3 (see page 13) shows the maximum sentence of inmate escapees for the time period of 2002-2006. The percentage totals of maximum sentence categories show that 44% of escapees were serving maximum sentences of less than six years.

The maximum sentence for escapees is compared to the under custody population for the year 2002-2006 in Table 6.4 (see page 13). Among the escaped inmates 72% had maximum terms of less than 10 years compared to only 56% of the under custody population for the 2002-2006 time period.

Table 6.3, Aggregate Maximum Sentence of Escapees by
Year of Escape, 2002 - 2006

Aggregate Max. Sentence	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
3 Years	1	0	1	1	1	4	22%
4 Years	0	1	1	0	0	2	11%
5 Years	0	0	0	0	2	2	11%
6-9 Years	2	2	0	0	1	5	28%
10-14 Years	0	1	0	0	0	1	6%
15-19 Years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
20-24 Years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
25 to Life	1	2	0	1	0	4	22%
Total	4	6	2	2	4	18	100%

Table 6.4, Aggregate Maximum Sentence of Escapees and
Under Custody Population, 2002 - 2006

Aggregate Maximum	Escapees 2002-2006	Under Custody 2002-2006
3 Years	22%	15%
4 Years	11%	10%
5 Years	11%	8%
6-9 Years	28%	23%
10-14 Years	6%	10%
15-19 Years	0%	6%
20-24 Years	0%	4%
25 to Life	22%	26%
Total	100%	100%

Section Seven, Time Served to Date of Escape

During the five-year time period of this report, fifty percent of escapees had served less than two years incarceration prior to escape. An examination of Table 7.1 reveals that one-third of escapees in the 2002-2006 time period had served four years or more of their current prison sentence.

The data for the under custody population is derived from the correctional population as of December 31 for each year. Table 7.2 reveals that at 6 ????????????????????

Table 7.1, Time Served Prior to Escape by
Year of Escape, 2002 - 2006

Time Served	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
< 1 Year	1	1	1	1	2	6	33%
1 Year	2	0	0	0	1	3	17%
2 Years	0	2	1	0	0	3	17%
3 Years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
4 Years	0	2	0	0	1	3	17%
5 Years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
6 + Years	1	1	0	1	0	3	17%
Total	4	6	2	2	4	18	100%

Table 7.2, Time Served of Escapees and
Under Custody Population, 2002 - 2006

Time Served	Escapees 2002-2006	Under Custody 2002-2006
< 1 Year	33%	30%
1 Year	17%	17%
2 Years	17%	11%
3 Years	0%	7%
4 Years	17%	5%
5 Years	0%	4%
6 + Years	17%	25%
Total	100%	100%

Section Eight, Duration of Escape

In 2006, all four inmates who escaped from custody were apprehended by correction staff or police. Two escapees were apprehended within 30 minutes; one escapee was caught 12 hours later; and, the fourth escapee, a minimum security inmate, was gone nearly four days before he was found and returned to NYSDOCS' custody.

Of the 18 inmates who escaped from custody during the 2002-2006 time period, 72% (N=13) were caught within 12 hours and all escapees were taken into custody in less than four days.

Escape Duration	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
< 6 hours	3	3	2	1	2	11	61%
6-12 hours	1	0	0	0	1	2	11%
13-23 hours	0	0	0	1	0	1	6%
1 day	0	3	0	0	0	3	17%
2-3 days	0	0	0	0	1	1	6%
4-7 days	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
8-29 days	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
1-6 months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
> 6 months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Not in custody	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	4	6	2	2	4	18	100%

Appendix A

Number of Inmate Escapes by Facility 2002 - 2006							
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
Maximum Security							
Auburn	0	0	0	0	1	1	6%
Elmira	0	2	0	0	0	2	11%
Green Haven	1	0	0	0	0	1	6%
Upstate	0	0	0	1	0	1	6%
Total	1	2	0	1	1	5	28%
Medium Security							
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	0	0	0	0	1	1	6%
Minimum Security							
Beacon	0	0	0	1	0	1	6%
Camp Gabriels	0	1	0	0	0	1	6%
Camp Georgetown	0	0	1	0	0	1	6%
Camp McGregor	0	1	1	0	0	2	11%
Edgecombe	0	0	0	0	1	1	6%
Fulton	0	1	0	0	0	1	6%
Hudson W. R.	0	1	0	0	0	1	6%
Moriah Shock	1	0	0	0	0	1	6%
Queensboro	1	0	0	0	0	1	6%
Rochester	1	0	0	0	1	2	11%
Total	3	4	2	1	2	12	67%
Grand Total	4	6	2	2	4	18	100%

Note: Facilities are shown if there was an escape during 2002-2006.

APPENDIX B

ESCAPES - 2002

<u>FACILITY</u>	<u>METHOD OF ESCAPE</u>
Moriah Shock	Walk away from facility grounds
Queensboro	Walk away from facility work detail
Rochester	Walk away from facility
Green Haven	Ran from room at community hospital and escaped

ESCAPES - 2003

<u>FACILITY</u>	<u>METHOD OF ESCAPE</u>
Camp McGregor	Walk away from facility
Camp Gabriels	Walk away from facility dormitory
Fulton	Walk away from facility work detail
Elmira	Escaped onto roof then down outside wall of building
Elmira	Escaped onto roof then down outside wall of building
Hudson Work Release	Walk away from facility

ESCAPES - 2004

<u>FACILITY</u>	<u>METHOD OF ESCAPE</u>
Camp McGregor	Walk away from facility
Camp Georgetown	Walk away from community work detail

ESCAPES - 2005

<u>FACILITY</u>	<u>METHOD OF ESCAPE</u>
Beacon	Walk away from facility
Upstate	While at community hospital escaped through roof in holding area

ESCAPES - 2006

<u>FACILITY</u>	<u>METHOD OF ESCAPE</u>
Rochester	Walk away from facility
Wyoming	Walk away from farm
Auburn	While in transit from hospital visit
Edgecombe	Walk away from facility

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