

Research in Brief

Special Conditions and Post-Release Outcomes over Time

KEY WORDS: conditional release, suspensions, revocations

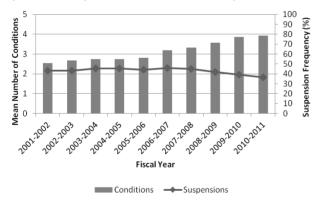
What it means

While other jurisdictions identified an association between increased conditions and increased suspensions, the opposite relationship was found in the present research. This pattern may be due to the fact that some of the conditions that increased the most are difficult to monitor (e.g., avoid certain people, avoid certain places) and are therefore less likely to lead to a return to custody. Alternatively, this pattern may be due to improvements in risk management over time.

What we found

While the imposition of special conditions has increased over time, the pattern of suspensions and revocations appears to have decreased slightly (see figure for special conditions and suspensions). Notably, increases in imposed conditions are not explained by changes in offenders' levels of risk and need upon release which have remained relatively stable.

Imposition of special conditions and suspensions



Note. 2011-2012 not included due to procedural changes that could impact the data.

Increases were evident for each condition type, with the imposition of some conditions increasing more than others, particularly those related to residing at a specific place, abstaining from alcohol and/or drugs, avoiding certain people, avoiding certain places, and mental health conditions. Across conditions, increases were concentrated in more recent years.

Additional analyses were conducted for women and Aboriginal offenders separately. The imposition of conditions increased for each group in keeping with the pattern for the full population. Conditions requiring the avoidance of certain people increased the most for both groups. In addition, conditions requiring abstinence from intoxicants were the ones most frequently imposed on Aboriginal offenders. Finally, returns to custody (i.e., suspensions and revocations) increased slightly for Aboriginal offenders, while decreasing for women at about the same rate as for the full population.

Why we did this study

Some correctional jurisdictions (e.g., California) have reported growth in incarcerated populations attributable to increasing rates of returns to custody due to breaches of parole conditions. As such, an exploratory investigation was undertaken to examine changes in the imposition of conditions and returns to custody in Canada.

What we did

Information regarding offenders' risk and need, special conditions imposed, and both suspensions and revocations in the first year following their first release (for those for whom a full year of post-release data was available) was examined for all offenders granted conditional release from the Correctional Service of Canada between 2001-02 and 2010-11 (N = 43,497).

For more information

Please e-mail the Research Branch or contact us by phone at (613) 995-3975.

You can also visit the website for a full list of research publications.

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