

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.

Section 84 Releases: Impact on Post-Release Outcomes

Indigenous men who participated in Section 84 releases were less likely to have a suspension or to be returned to custody; Indigenous women Section 84 participants were less likely to commit a new offence.

Why we did this study

Recent research examining the profile of Section 84 release¹ Indigenous participants indicated that they were more involved in Indigenous culture and were deemed a lower risk at release compared to Indigenous offenders who did not participate in this initiative. Building on an evaluation by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC)² to examine the impact of Section 84 releases on post-release success, this study compared release suspensions and returns to custody for Section 84 and non-Section 84 participants.

What we did

In total, 4,780 federal Indigenous men and 485 federal Indigenous women offenders were released on conditional release³ between April 1, 2012 and March 31, 2017.⁴ Of these 1,084 men and 199 women participated in Section 84 releases. First Nations men accounted for 68% of the release cohort, while 27% were Métis and 4% were Inuit. For women, 71% were First Nations, 27% were Métis, and 2% were Inuit. Analyses⁵ accounted for time at risk and other potential factors that impacted on post-release success: first release suspension and returns to custody (with or without an offence).⁵

What we found

For Indigenous men, Section 84 participants were less likely than non-Section 84 participants to have a suspension (57% versus 69%, respectively) or a return to custody (42% versus 55%, respectively); there was no difference for returning with a new offence. After controlling for time at risk as well as other factors,⁶ non-Section 84 participants were 14% more likely to be suspended and 26% more likely to return to custody. On average, Section 84 men participants remained in the community one month longer prior to their first suspension and one and a half

months longer prior to returning to custody than non-participants.

For Indigenous women, Section 84 participants were less likely to return to custody due to a new offence compared to non-participants (7% versus 13% respectively). Women who participated in Section 84 releases remained in the community for one month longer prior to their first suspension and two months longer prior to returning to custody. However, there were no significant differences between Section 84 and non-Section 84 participants with respect to release suspensions and returns to custody for technical violations, after accounting for security classification at release, release type, and an identified treatment need for substance misuse.⁷

What it means

Findings demonstrate that Section 84 releases are a positive reintegration strategy for Indigenous offenders. In addition, even for those men and women who experienced difficulties on release, Section 84 participants remained in the community longer than those who did not participate. For Indigenous women, future research utilizing a longer time frame would be beneficial, as reduced statistical power may have underestimated the impact of Section 84 releases.

For more information

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

You can also visit the [Research Publications](#) section for a full list of reports and one-page summaries.

Prepared by: Shanna Farrell MacDonald

¹ Section 84 releases are a legislated directive in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act that allow Indigenous offender to be released to an Indigenous community during conditional release.

² Allegri, et al. (2013). *Evaluation report: The strategic plan for Aboriginal corrections* (File 394-2-49). Ottawa, ON: CSC.

³ Includes discretionary (day or full parole) and non-discretionary (statutory release or long term supervision order) releases.

⁴ The initial release for the most recent sentence served was examined. Indigenous offenders who were initially released on a non-Section 84 release but whose release converted to a Section 84 release (30 men and seven women) were excluded from the study.

⁵ Additional analyses were conducted using matched comparison groups. Men were matched by Indigenous group (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit), security classification at release, and release type. Women were matched by Indigenous group and release type. As findings were similar, only the results from the non-matched groups were presented.

⁶ Other factors included security classification at release, type of release, region of supervision, marital status, static risk, overall dynamic risk rating, and on-going Elder progress reviews while incarcerated.

⁷ Substance misuse was measured using the Women's Computerized Assessment of Substance Abuse.