OVERVIEW

Since the inception of the program in November, 1972 to December 1987, 121,713 furloughs\(^1\) have been granted to 10,835 inmates.\(^2\)

Of these 428 resulted in an escape and 219 resulted in a return of over 2 hours late, yielding an overall escape rate of 0.5 percent.\(^1\)

Escape rate has gradually declined since the inception of the program, from 1.9% in 1973 to 0.1% in 1987.\(^3\)

Since the inception of the program, there has been a trend toward a decreasing proportion of the released population having furlough program participation prior to release, from 74% in 1974 to 27% in 1986.\(^4\)

As of January 1, 1987, there were 1,582 inmates in the DOC with one or more furloughs out of a population of 5,636. Thus, 28% of the population have had one or more furloughs.\(^5\)

In 1986, 27 percent of all releases had one or more furloughs prior to release. Thirty-four percent of all men and 6 percent of all women were furloughed prior to release.\(^6\)
**FIRST-DEGREE LIFERS:**

Between 1972 and 1975, 792 furloughs were granted to first-degree lifers that resulted in 6 escapes, for an escape rate of 0.78 or 7.8 escapes per 1,000 furloughs.7

Between 1976 and 1980, 2,328 escapes were granted to first-degree lifers and 2 escapes resulted, yielding an escape rate of 0.08 or .8 escapes per 1,000 furloughs.8

Between 1981 and 1986, 2,434 furloughs were granted and 3 escapes resulted, yielding an escape rate of 0.12 percent or 1.2 escapes per 1,000 furloughs.8

There is currently no information available on the furlough activity of first-degree lifers during 1987.

**SECOND-DEGREE LIFERS:**

From 1976-1980, 5,233 furloughs were granted to second-degree lifers and 12 resulted in an escape for an escape rate of 0.22% or 2.2 escapes per 1,000 furloughs.8

From 1981-1986 6,293 furloughs were granted to second-degree lifers and 9 resulted in an escape for an escape rate of 0.14% or 1.4 escapes per 1,000 furloughs.8
At this point no information is available on furlough activity for second-degree lifers in 1987.

Lifers in the Department of Correction:

At the end of October 1987 there were 788 lifers in DOC facilities (including Bridgewater State Hospital and Bridgewater Treatment Center) including lifers incarcerated for Murder-1 (N=328) murder-2 (N=396) and other offenses (N=66).9

Commutations:

From 1981 to 1986, 9 first-degree lifers had been released following a commutation. All had participated in the furlough program prior to release.10

Furloughs and Recidivism:

Between 1973 and 1984, those persons who had experienced a furlough prior to release from prison had significantly lower rates of recidivism than did individuals who had not experienced a furlough prior to release. This trend held for twelve consecutive years.11 For example, in 1984 the recidivism rate for inmates released with one or more prior furloughs was 12% compared to 31% for inmates with no furlough program participation.11

2. Source is *MONTHLY/FURLOUGH/TABLES*, a non-published statistical tabulation that is produced as a result of the monthly up-date process.


5. Source is *Statistical Description of Residents of Massachusetts Correctional Institutions on January 1, 1987*, pages 116-117.


7. Source is inmate master file special listing of first-degree lifers and commuted first-degree lifers, since reports for the period 1972-1975 did not disaggregate furlough program participation by offense.


10. Source is Parole Board for 1981 to 1985 a *Statistical Description of Releases From Massachusetts Correctional Institutions During 1986*.

11. Source is *The Effect of Community Reintegration on Rates of Recidivism: A Statistical Overview of Data for The Years 1971 Through 1983* and *Statistical Tables Describing the Background Characteristics and Recidivism Rates for Releases From Massachusetts Correctional Institutions During 1984*. 