

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.

Escapes from Federal Custody: 2021-2022 to 2023-2024

Escapes from federal custody typically occurred at minimum security facilities. Most incidents occurred in the Prairie region, involved Indigenous offenders, and occurred soon after the offender's arrival to the institution.

Why we did this study

Escapes from federal institutions are relatively uncommon events, though are a key indicator of correctional performance, with implications for public safety and public confidence. The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) regularly reviews details surrounding escapes and the profiles of offenders involved.

What we did

Information pertaining to escape incidents¹ in fiscal years 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 was examined, including incident details and characteristics of the individual(s) involved. Information sources included Incident Reports, Warden Situation Reports, and case documents located in the Offender Management System.

What we found

Between 2021-2022 and 2023-2024, there were 25 escapes (this included 5 in 2021-2022, 11 in 2022-2023, and 9 in 2023-2024). Regarding these incidents:

- 80% occurred in the Prairie region;
- 72% occurred at a Healing Lodge;
- 72% occurred at a men's institution;
- 92% involved minimum security offenders;
- 76% involved Indigenous offenders; and
- The average age of instigators was 37.

In 40% of cases, the offender's security level classification at the time of the escape represented a decrease from the results of the most recent assessment tool score² used to inform security level decision-making. In 48% of cases, the offender's security level represented their initial security classification on their current federal sentence.

Most (80%) incidents occurred within six months of the offender's arrival to the institution of escape (the average time at the institution was 4.1 months). All offenders who escaped in the three-year period were apprehended, with 44% being recaptured within one day. Proximal risk factors that may have contributed to motivations for escape varied (e.g., recent negative news, family conflict/crisis, interpersonal conflict, escalating stress).

¹ An escape from custody involves the unlawful departure by an offender from the institutional boundaries of a federal institution.

² An offender's security classification is informed by the results of actuarial tools (i.e., Custody Rating Scale and Security Reclassification

Scale/Security Reclassification Scale for Women) in conjunction with the structured professional judgement of an offender's risk level in the areas of public safety, escape potential, and institutional adjustment.

Table 1. Escapes from Federal Custody, 2018-2019 to 2023-2024.

Facility Type	Fiscal Year					
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Healing Lodge	8	1	6	4	7	7
Other CSC Institution	8	11	5	1	4	2
Total	16	12	11	5	11	9

Counts include the total number of unique individuals involved in escape incidents.

What it means

Minimum security settings serve as an integral component of gradual reintegration, whereby offenders are sequentially granted more freedoms in line with safe and structured release planning. CSC monitors, tracks, and investigates all escape incidents to inform preventative measures and to ensure public safety is at the core of gradual and structured reintegration strategies. Multi-pronged mitigation strategies are in place to prevent escapes, including structured assessments of escape risk, static and dynamic security systems, and case management and programs intended to address risk factors, including culturally-responsive interventions.

For more information

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

Prepared by: Laura McKendy & Stephanie Biro