

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.

## Escapes from Healing Lodges, 2019-2020 to 2022-2023

*Healing Lodge escapes were typically non-violent, instigated by a single offender, and involved departure on foot.*

### Why we did this study

As a key component of Indigenous corrections, Indigenous Healing Lodges provide a culturally responsive environment, allowing federal offenders who commit to an Indigenous healing path to participate in Indigenous healing practices, programming, and services. Past [research](#) highlights the positive impacts of Healing Lodges on offender gains and outcomes. While most Healing Lodge residents do not engage in escape-related behaviours, escapes from Healing Lodges are a concern for the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC). Analysis of escapes from Healing Lodges can shed light on the nature of incidents, including precipitating and proximal risk factors.

### What we did

Escapes from Healing Lodges were identified using an incident-level data search of CSC's computerized database, the Offender Management System (OMS). Information on the nature of incidents and the profile of offenders involved was gathered. Escapes from both [CSC-operated and community-operated](#) Healing Lodge facilities were examined.

### What we found

Between 2019-2020 and 2022-2023, there was a total of 18 escapes from Healing Lodges. For reference, there were 236 offenders in Healing Lodges at 2022-2023 fiscal year end. Escapes included one incident in 2019-2020, six incidents in 2020-2021, four incidents in 2021-2022, and seven incidents in 2022-2023. Of these 18 incidents, 11 occurred at a CSC-operated facility, while seven occurred at a community-operated facility. Incidents occurred at seven unique institutions, with the highest counts at Willow Cree Healing Lodge, with five incidents, and Eagle Women's Lodge with four. All but three incidents occurred in the Prairie region. At the time of data collection, no offenders remained unlawfully at large. Days at large varied, though 61% were recaptured within two weeks of the escape incident.

Consistent with broader trends in escapes from CSC institutions (McKendy & Keown, 2017; Johnson & Motiuk, 1992), escapes tended to:

- Be precipitated by an upsetting event (e.g., receiving bad news, case setbacks);
- Be unplanned and/or opportunistic;
- Be carried out without violence;
- Involve departure on foot.

With respect to the profile of offenders involved:

- Ten were men and eight were women;
- Most were Indigenous (89%);
- All but one were classified as minimum security;
- Over half had prior escape-related or unlawfully at large incidents;
- Five had a security level designation that represented a security decrease from results on security assessment tools (i.e., the Custody Rating Scale or Security Reclassification Scale/Security Reclassification Scale-Women).

### What it means

The circumstances of Healing Lodge escapes and profiles of instigators are consistent with trends noted in relation to escapes from custody more generally (McKendy & Keown, 2017; Johnson & Motiuk, 1992). Escapes typically involve departure on foot in response to an immediate stressor, and, in most cases, do not involve or result in violence. Nonetheless, escapes from custody are a key concern for operational security and public safety. Tracking and analysis of incidents remains ongoing to inform operational and preventative measures.

### References

- McKendy, L. & Keown, L.A. (2017). Profiling escapes from federal custody 2011/2012 – 2016/2017. Ottawa, Ontario: Correctional Service Canada.
- Johnston, J. C., & Motiuk, L. (1992). Unlawful departures from minimum security institutions: A comparative investigation. Ottawa, Ontario: Correctional Service Canada.

### For more information

For questions and/or more information, please email [Research Branch](#). You can also visit the [Research Publications](#) section for a full list of reports and one-page summaries.

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