

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

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## Conditions of Release for Federal Women Offenders

*Controlling for risk factors, returns to custody did not increase with number of conditions imposed for women offenders; suspension rates increased for Indigenous women only.*

### Why we did this study

Prior research indicated that the number of special release conditions imposed for federal offenders on conditional release increased from 2000 to 2011, although this increase did not appear to have an impact on the rate of suspensions or returns to custody.<sup>1</sup> The current study examined the pattern and impact of conditions imposed for federal Indigenous and non-Indigenous women offenders.

### What we did

Women on their first conditional release between April 2013 and March 2017 were included in this study. Overall, 1,351 women were released; 30% ( $n = 403$ ) were Indigenous (21% First Nations, 8% Métis, and 1% Inuit). Release conditions imposed within 90 days prior to release were examined. Patterns of conditions and their impact on suspensions and returns to custody were explored.

### What we found

Almost all Indigenous and non-Indigenous women had special release conditions imposed (99.5% versus 99.6%). Indigenous women were more likely to have the following conditions: abstain from alcohol or drugs, avoid certain people, follow treatment/programming plan, or a residency condition. Non-Indigenous women were more likely to have an “other”<sup>2</sup> condition imposed. Although the average number of conditions for Indigenous and non-Indigenous women did not differ significantly (5 versus 4), Indigenous women were more likely to have five or more conditions (58% versus 44%).<sup>3</sup> Indigenous women had a higher risk profile at release and were more likely to be released on statutory release.

**Suspensions.** Overall, 66% of Indigenous women and 38% of non-Indigenous women with release conditions were suspended. Suspensions were most common for those with residency, alcohol/drug, or treatment/programming

conditions, regardless of ancestry. Bivariate analysis showed that suspension rates increased with the number of conditions imposed for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous women. However, controlling for time at risk and other risk factors<sup>4</sup> the number of conditions imposed was associated with higher rates of suspensions for Indigenous women only.

**Returns to Custody.** Almost half (46%) of Indigenous women and 21% of non-Indigenous women with release conditions returned to custody. Returns to custody were most common for Indigenous women who had residency, alcohol/drug, and avoid people conditions while for non-Indigenous women those with residency, alcohol/drug, and treatment or programming conditions had higher rates of return to custody. When time at risk and other factors<sup>4</sup> were controlled, no direct association of the type or number of conditions and returns to custody was observed.

### What it means

The same proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women had release conditions imposed, but the number of conditions had an association with the rate of suspensions for Indigenous women only. These findings, however, did not link imposition of special release conditions to returns to custody for either group. This suggests that imposition of more conditions for Indigenous women may increase suspensions but does not translate into increased public safety. Given the high needs of these women, particularly in the area of substance misuse, enhancing community services and support may be expected to have an impact on results.

### 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

<sup>1</sup> Ritchie, M., Saddleback, C., & Gobeil, R. (2014). *Special conditions and post-release outcomes over time* (RS 14-17). Ottawa, ON: CSC.

<sup>2</sup> Other conditions include reporting to police, abstaining from driving, avoid gambling/gambling establishments, reporting relationships, financial restrictions, computer and telecommunication restrictions, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Twenty-five women had 10-14 release conditions; 76% were released in Ontario. 80% were released on statutory release. Manual file coding for six women indicated that the women had complex substance use and mental

health needs as well as responsivity issues that required a high level of structure and/or support upon release.

<sup>4</sup> Other factors controlled for in the survival analysis were: security classification at release, release type, dynamic factor rating, static factor rating, reintegration potential, motivation level, Women's Computerized Assessment of Substance Abuse (WCASA) treatment need, criminogenic need areas, releasing region, age at release, sentence number, and sentence length.