

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE
Pursuant to MCL 791.240(4)
Quarterly Report of Parole Absconders
July 2011

Section 40 (4) of Public Act 487 of 2006:

- “The Department shall report to the legislature on a quarterly basis both of the following:
- (a) The number of parolees who are absconders.
 - (b) The number of parolees who have been absconders for more than 3 months.”

Analysis of information contained in the Department’s CMIS data base showed that:

- As of 7/10/2011 there were 2,061 parolees listed as absconders.
- Of the 2,061 absconders, 1,323 had been on abscond status for more than 90 days.

The number of absconders increased by 3.9% since the last report, but the number on abscond status for more than 90 days decreased by 4.4%. The overall average time at large is still about the same, and 91% of these cases are Very Low, Low or Middle risk for assaultive behavior on parole.

Despite the small increase in absconders during the quarter, there are still 21.3% fewer parole absconders now than there were when this quarterly reporting began over four years ago (-557). During that same period of time, the parole population is 30.1% larger (+4,825).

It is also worth noting that 71% of all absconders were placed on that status within the past fifteen months, demonstrating that most cases are resolved within a comparatively short time. Furthermore, about eight of every ten absconders are ultimately continued on parole supervision following detection; generally with a local sanction and frequently under increased terms of supervision. The principal determinant of whether an offender gets continued on parole is the assessment of risk to the public. If it is determined that the parolee does not present a significant risk of harm apart from a failure to report or an unreported move, the chances are quite high that he/she will be allowed to remain in the community, albeit with adjusted supervision requirements.

The MDOC Field Operations Administration believes that public protection can and will be enhanced by promoting offender success through Collaborative Case Management. Traditional parole supervision has been to monitor parolees to detect violation behavior and respond to it appropriately. When the focus shifts from detection to reducing risk and addressing needs by anticipating and responding to problem behavior, parole violations are reduced.

Absconder warrants can generally be divided into two types; failure to report and fleeing from supervision. While some parolees will undoubtedly flee supervision, the majority of "absconders" are avoiding supervision. With collaborative case management, agents work with offenders, their family members, and significant others to address problems and barriers to success. Failures to report because of drug use, loss of employment, police contact, etc., are reduced when parolees recognize that the role of the agent is to not only hold them accountable, but also to assist in their success.

When adjustment problems are dealt with through collaboration, counseling, treatment, or other interventions, not only are fewer warrants for failure to report issued, but minor problems don't escalate into more serious violation behavior. As collaborative case management is implemented throughout the state, we should continue to see a reduction in the number of absconder warrants issued.