

Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics Online

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Table 5.48.2002

Mean and median maximum length of felony sentences imposed by State courts

By offense, United States, 2002

(In months)

Most serious conviction offense	Maximum sentence length for felons sentenced to:			
	Incarceration			Probation
	Total	Prison	Jail	
<u>Mean sentence</u>				
All offenses	36	53	7	38
Violent offenses	62	84	8	43
Murder, nonnegligent manslaughter	217	225	10	76
Sexual assault, rape	78	100	8	54
Rape	104	132	9	65
Other sexual assault	65	84	8	51
Robbery	79	91	11	52
Aggravated assault	37	54	7	39
Other violent ^a	33	51	8	37
Property offenses	28	41	7	37
Burglary	36	50	7	40
Larceny, motor vehicle theft	22	34	6	36
Motor vehicle theft	18	30	6	33
Fraud, forgery, embezzlement	24	38	6	36
Drug offenses	32	48	6	36
Possession	22	35	5	33
Trafficking	38	55	7	39
Weapons offenses	28	38	7	35
Other offenses ^b	23	38	6	37
<u>Median sentence</u>				
All offenses	19	36	6	36
Violent offenses	36	51	6	36
Murder, nonnegligent manslaughter	240	240	12	60
Sexual assault, rape	48	60	6	36
Rape	60	96	7	60
Other sexual assault	36	60	6	36
Robbery	52	60	12	60
Aggravated assault	24	36	6	36
Other violent ^a	16	30	6	36
Property offenses	16	28	6	36
Burglary	24	36	6	36
Larceny, motor vehicle theft	13	24	6	36
Motor vehicle theft	12	24	6	24
Fraud, forgery, embezzlement	12	24	5	36
Drug offenses	18	36	6	36
Possession	12	24	3	36
Trafficking	24	36	6	36
Weapons offenses	24	24	6	30
Other offenses ^b	12	27	4	36

Note: See Notes, [tables 5.44.2002](#) and [5.47.2002](#). Means exclude sentences to death or to life in prison. The median sentence is the sentence length that marks the point below which and above which 50% of all sentence lengths fall. Sentence length data were available for 945,167 convicted felons sentenced to incarceration and probation. For survey sampling procedures and definitions of terms, see [Appendix 16](#).

^aIncludes offenses such as negligent manslaughter and kidnaping.

^bComposed of nonviolent offenses such as receiving stolen property and vandalism.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Felony Sentences in State Courts, 2002*, Bulletin NCJ 206916 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, December 2004), p. 4.