

Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics Online

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Table 6.81.2009

Prisoners under sentence of death

By demographic characteristics, prior felony conviction history, and legal status, United States, on Dec. 31, 1996-2009^a

	Percent of prisoners													
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Sex														
Male	98.5%	98.7%	98.6%	98.6%	98.5%	98.6%	98.6%	98.6%	98.4%	98.4%	98.3%	98.3%	98.2%	98.1%
Female	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.9
Race^b														
White	56.5	56.3	55.2	55.2	55.4	55.0	54.3	55.7	55.8	55.5	55.8	56.0	56.1	56.1
Black	41.9	42.2	43.0	42.9	42.7	42.9	43.7	42.0	41.9	42.2	41.9	41.8	41.7	41.5
Other	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.0	2.3	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.4
Hispanic origin														
Hispanic	8.8	9.2	10.0	10.2	10.6	11.2	11.5	12.5	12.6	12.7	11.1	12.9	13.2	13.5
Non-Hispanic	91.2	90.8	90.0	89.8	89.4	88.8	88.5	87.5	87.4	87.3	76.1	87.1	86.8	86.5
Age^c														
19 years and younger	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.1	(d)	(d)	0	0	(d)	0	0
20 to 24 years	8.7	8.2	7.7	7.1	6.6	5.4	4.3	3.9	2.9	1.9	1.6	1.3	1.4	1.2
25 to 29 years	14.9	14.9	15.0	14.6	13.6	13.2	12.7	11.9	11.0	9.9	8.7	7.7	6.9	5.5
30 to 34 years	18.5	17.3	16.9	16.8	17.1	17.5	17.0	16.7	16.0	15.2	14.1	13.4	12.1	12.3
35 to 39 years	21.8	21.8	20.6	20.0	19.1	17.9	17.4	17.2	17.8	17.9	18.5	17.8	17.6	16.8
40 to 44 years	14.9	15.6	16.7	17.0	18.2	18.8	19.6	18.2	18.2	18.1	17.4	17.0	16.9	17.0
45 to 49 years	10.6	10.6	10.2	10.5	10.9	11.8	12.7	14.1	14.9	16.4	17.1	18.1	17.9	17.9
50 to 54 years	5.7	6.5	7.5	7.9	8.0	8.5	8.5	8.8	8.8	9.4	10.3	11.1	12.3	13.3
55 to 59 years	2.5	2.6	2.9	3.2	3.5	4.1	4.9	5.8	6.6	7.0	7.6	7.8	7.6	7.8
60 years and older	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.3	2.7	2.6	2.8	3.3	3.8	4.2	4.7	5.8	7.2	8.2
Education														
Grade 8 or less	14.4	14.2	14.3	13.9	14.4	14.5	14.7	15.2	15.1	14.3	13.9	13.8	13.5	13.5
Grades 9 to 11	37.5	37.6	37.6	37.7	37.3	37.2	37.1	37.1	37.2	36.9	37.0	36.7	36.5	36.0
High school graduate/GED	37.8	38.0	38.0	38.2	38.2	38.4	38.5	38.3	38.5	39.6	40.0	40.4	40.8	41.5
Any college	10.2	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	9.9	9.7	9.3	9.2	9.2	9.0	9.2	9.2	9.0
Marital status														
Married	24.9	24.5	24.0	22.9	22.6	22.1	22.1	22.5	22.1	22.2	21.7	22.2	22.2	21.9
Divorced or separated	21.3	21.3	20.8	21.2	21.0	21.0	20.8	20.7	20.6	20.5	20.6	20.4	20.1	20.5
Widowed	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	2.8	2.9	2.8
Never married	51.1	51.5	52.5	53.0	53.6	54.3	54.3	54.0	54.4	54.4	54.8	54.5	54.7	54.7
Prior felony conviction														
Yes	65.7	65.3	65.0	64.1	64.0	64.4	64.3	64.5	64.4	65.0	65.5	65.4	65.5	65.7
No	34.3	34.7	35.0	35.9	36.0	35.6	35.7	35.5	35.6	35.0	34.5	34.6	34.5	34.3
Prior homicide conviction														
Yes	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.4	8.1	8.0	8.0	8.2	8.2	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.3	8.6
No	91.4	91.4	91.4	91.6	91.9	92.0	92.0	91.8	91.8	91.6	91.6	91.6	91.7	91.4
Legal status at time of capital offense														
Charges pending	7.3	7.6	7.2	7.4	7.1	7.3	7.5	7.9	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.9	7.8	7.7
Probation	10.0	10.1	9.9	10.0	10.1	10.3	10.5	10.8	10.6	10.5	10.6	10.6	10.6	10.5
Parole	20.0	19.5	18.1	17.9	17.6	17.5	17.3	16.5	16.1	16.2	16.0	15.4	15.3	15.2
Prison escapee	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.5
Incarcerated	2.4	2.6	2.9	2.8	2.7	3.0	3.2	3.1	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.7	4.1
Other status	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5
None	57.7	58.0	59.7	60.0	60.6	60.2	59.8	59.7	60.1	60.1	60.2	60.6	60.8	60.6

Note: Percents are based on those cases for which data were reported. Due to a large number of cases with missing data on the education variable, users should use caution when interpreting these figures.

^a Percents may not add to 100 because of rounding.

^b Includes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin.

^c The youngest person under sentence of death in 1996 was a black male in Nevada born in May 1979 and sentenced to death in June 1996; in 1997, a black male in Alabama born in November 1979 and sentenced to death in October 1997; in 1998, a black male in Alabama born in July 1980 and sentenced to death in December 1998; in 1999, a black male in Texas born in December 1981 and sentenced to death in November 1999; in 2000, a white male in Arizona born in April 1982 and sentenced to death in October 2000; in 2001, a black male in North Carolina born in December 1982 and sentenced to death in November 2001; in 2002 and 2003, a white male in Texas, born in April 1984 and sentenced to death in August 2002; in 2004, a white male in Texas born in February 1986 and sentenced to death in August 2004; in 2005, a black male in Alabama born in May 1985 and sentenced to death in October 2005; in 2006, a white male in Florida born in May 1986 and sentenced to death in September 2006; in 2007, a black male in Texas born in June 1988 and sentenced to death in June 2007. The oldest person under sentence of death during the years 1996 to 2008 was a white male in Arizona born in September 1915 and sentenced to death in June 1983.

^d Less than 0.05%.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Capital Punishment 1996*, Bulletin NCJ-167031, p. 8, Table 7, p. 9; p. 10, Table 9; *1997*, Bulletin NCJ-172881, p. 8, Table 7, p. 9; p. 10, Table 9; *1998*, Bulletin NCJ 179012, p. 8, Table 7, p. 9; p. 10, Table 9; *1999*, Bulletin NCJ 184795, p. 8, Table 7, p. 9; p. 10, Table 9; *2000*, Bulletin NCJ 190598, p. 8, Table 7, p. 9; p. 10, Table 9; *2001*, Bulletin NCJ 197020, p. 8, Table 7, p. 9; p. 10, Table 9; *2002*, Bulletin NCJ 201848, p. 6; p. 7, Table 7, p. 8; *2003*, Bulletin NCJ 206627, p. 6, Table 5, p. 7, Table 7, p. 8; *2004*, Bulletin NCJ 211349, p. 6, Table 5, p. 7, Table 7, p. 8; *2005*, Bulletin NCJ 215083, p. 6, Table 5, p. 7, Table 7, p. 8 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice); *2006 Statistical Tables*, NCJ 220219, Tables 5, 7, and 8 [Online]. Available: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/html/cp/2006/tables/cp06st05.htm>, and <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/html/cp/2006/tables/cp06st07.htm>, and <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/html/cp/2006/tables/cp06st08.htm> [Jan. 10, 2008]; *2007 Statistical Tables*, NCJ 224528, Tables 5, 7, and 8 [Online]. Available: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/html/cp/2007/tables/cp07st05.htm>, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/html/cp/2007/tables/cp07st07.htm>, and <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/html/cp/2007/tables/cp07st08.htm> [Jan. 5, 2009]; *2008 - Statistical Tables*, NCJ 228662, Tables 5, 7, and 8 [Online]. Available: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/cp08st.pdf> [Jan. 11, 2010]; *2009 - Statistical Tables*, NCJ 231676, Table 5 and Table 10 [Online]. Available: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/cp09st.pdf> [Dec. 7, 2010]. Table adapted by SOURCEBOOK staff.