

Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics Online

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Table 5.48.2006

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

By offense, United States, 2006

(In months)

Most serious conviction offense	Maximum sentence length for felons sentenced to:			Straight probation
	Incarceration			
	Total	Prison	Jail	
<u>Mean sentence</u>				
All offenses	38	59	6	38
Violent offenses	71	96	7	44
Murder, nonnegligent manslaughter	244	250	10	71
Sexual assault, rape	106	129	8	58
Rape	138	162	8	60
Other sexual assault ^a	78	98	8	57
Robbery	87	101	10	51
Aggravated assault	41	62	6	40
Other violent ^b	38	59	7	42
Property offenses	30	47	6	38
Burglary	41	57	7	42
Larceny, motor vehicle theft	22	38	6	37
Motor vehicle theft	19	31	6	35
Fraud, forgery, embezzlement	28	45	5	37
Drug offenses	31	50	5	37
Possession	23	38	5	36
Trafficking	38	57	6	38
Weapons offenses	32	48	6	37
Other offenses ^c	24	41	5	36
<u>Median sentence</u>				
All offenses	17	36	5	36
Violent offenses	36	60	6	36
Murder, nonnegligent manslaughter	264	267	12	60
Sexual assault, rape	60	84	6	48
Rape	96	120	6	36
Other sexual assault ^a	44	60	6	48
Robbery	60	72	9	60
Aggravated assault	24	42	6	36
Other violent ^b	18	36	6	36
Property offenses	15	32	6	36
Burglary	24	36	6	36
Larceny, motor vehicle theft	12	24	6	36
Motor vehicle theft	12	24	6	36
Fraud, forgery, embezzlement	12	29	4	36
Drug offenses	14	36	4	36
Possession	12	24	4	36
Trafficking	21	36	5	36
Weapons offenses	23	36	6	36
Other offenses ^c	12	26	4	24

Note: These data are from the National Judicial Reporting Program (NJRP), a biennial survey of State felony courts. Data were collected for the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics by the U.S. Census Bureau. The 2006 NJRP survey was based on a sample of 300 counties selected to be nationally representative. The sample included at least one county from every State except, by chance, Nevada, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Only offenses that State penal codes define as felonies are included. Excluded are Federal courts and State or local courts that did not adjudicate adult felony cases. Data on sentence length were reported for 95% of incarceration sentences and 93% of probation sentences. For persons receiving a combination of sentences, the sentence designation came from the most severe penalty imposed—prison being the most severe, followed by jail, then probation. Means exclude sentences to death, life imprisonment, and probation. These data are estimates derived from a sample and therefore are subject to sampling variation. For survey sampling procedures and definitions of terms, see [Appendix 16](#).

^a Includes offenses such as statutory rape and incest with a minor.

^b Includes offenses such as negligent manslaughter and kidnapping.

^c Composed 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, 2006--Statistical Tables*, NCJ 226846, Table 1.3 [Online]. Available: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/fssc06st.pdf> [Feb. 15, 2011].