

Measure 3: Post-Sentence ALOS for DOC-Ready Inmates

A. Background

Collecting useful statistics regarding the length of stay for Orange County inmates who have received a final sentence to the Florida Department of Corrections is a complex task. A number of factors and intervening variables must be excluded in order to make “clean” comparisons across time. The original length of stay statistic for inmates released in 2001 was presented to JOC as 45 days. The “true” number for this time period is probably somewhere around 34 days. This is due to some flaws in the Crystal Reports that were used to retrieve LOS information for individuals sentenced to DOC.

B. Statistics

Since August 2002, the mean ALOS for individuals sentenced to DOC is 20.3 days while the median ALOS is 14 days. Because the data are distributed in such a way that a few cases have abnormally long lengths of stay (therefore inflating the mean) and because no test for statistical significance is necessary, it is recommended that the median length of stay be used (Toothaker, 1986). However, both measures of central tendency are reported here. In the 10 months examined, the length of time between final sentencing and release to DOC is split as follows:

- The time between final sentence and the receipt of the completed commitment packet has a mean of 9.5 days and a median of 7 days. (This is slightly different from a similar number reported by other sources. There are a myriad of reasons why this number differs, such as different time spans being analyzed, different populations examined, and an inherent time delay involved in shipping and processing the completed commitment packet).
- The time between processing the packet and actual shipment to DOC has a mean of 10.8 days and a median of 7 days.

All of the ALOS statistics exclude inmates who have had holds, add-on charges, or consecutive sentences to DOC and Orange County.

C. Best Practices

The literature on releases to state correctional departments is rife with guidelines. However, with rare exception, the assumption behind these guidelines is that the particular state involved is refusing these so-called “paper-ready” inmates due to prison overcrowding. For example, in the Summer of 2002, a Federal judge fined the Alabama Department of Corrections for not accepting paper-ready inmates after the statutorily defined 30-day limit (Corrections Professional, 7/12/2002). Meanwhile, Texas has faced similar concerns, prompting modifications of its state jail and prison system. The literature has few guidelines regarding transfers to state prison that do not cover a state system refusing to accept paper-ready inmates. However, the April 22, 2002 edition of the New York Law Journal details how Suffolk County, New York has been able to manage its crowding issues. One of the crowding management methods Suffolk utilizes was to expedite the transfer of inmates to state prison. Suffolk County now operates under, and meets, a 5-day transfer guideline. Paperwork is completed immediately after sentencing, enabling the county to reduce the transfer time by two weeks or more. The table at the top of the next page highlights the projected amount of money saved if the DOC-ready LOS is reduced to the 5-day standard.

Measure 3: DOC-Ready Inmates (Cont.)

Projected Savings Assuming 5-Day Median Transfer Time

Current DOC-Ready ALOS	Best Practice	Difference	Marginal Per Diem	Annual Inmates Affected	Total Savings
14 days	5 days	9 days	\$8.75	1,839	\$144,821

The ambitious 5-day standard is nearly matched by Clark County, Indiana ([The Indiana Lawyer](#), 11/21/2001). However, a check on the Internet indicated that Clark County's jail is very small (230 inmates) and therefore is not suitable for a benchmark. Meanwhile, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin secured a court order limiting total processing time for probation and parole violators who are heading to state prison to be a maximum of 10 days. While this does not cover every type of release to DOC, the 10-day processing time seems to be more realistic in terms of logistics. In addition, Bernalillo County, New Mexico (the 35th largest jail in the nation) has an agreement with the courts for a total processing time of between 7 and 10 days for inmates headed to state prison (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2000).

Projected Savings Assuming 10-Day Median Transfer Time

Current DOC-Ready ALOS	Best Practice	Difference	Marginal Per Diem	Annual Inmates Affected	Total Savings
14 days	10 days	4 days	\$8.75	1,839	\$64,365