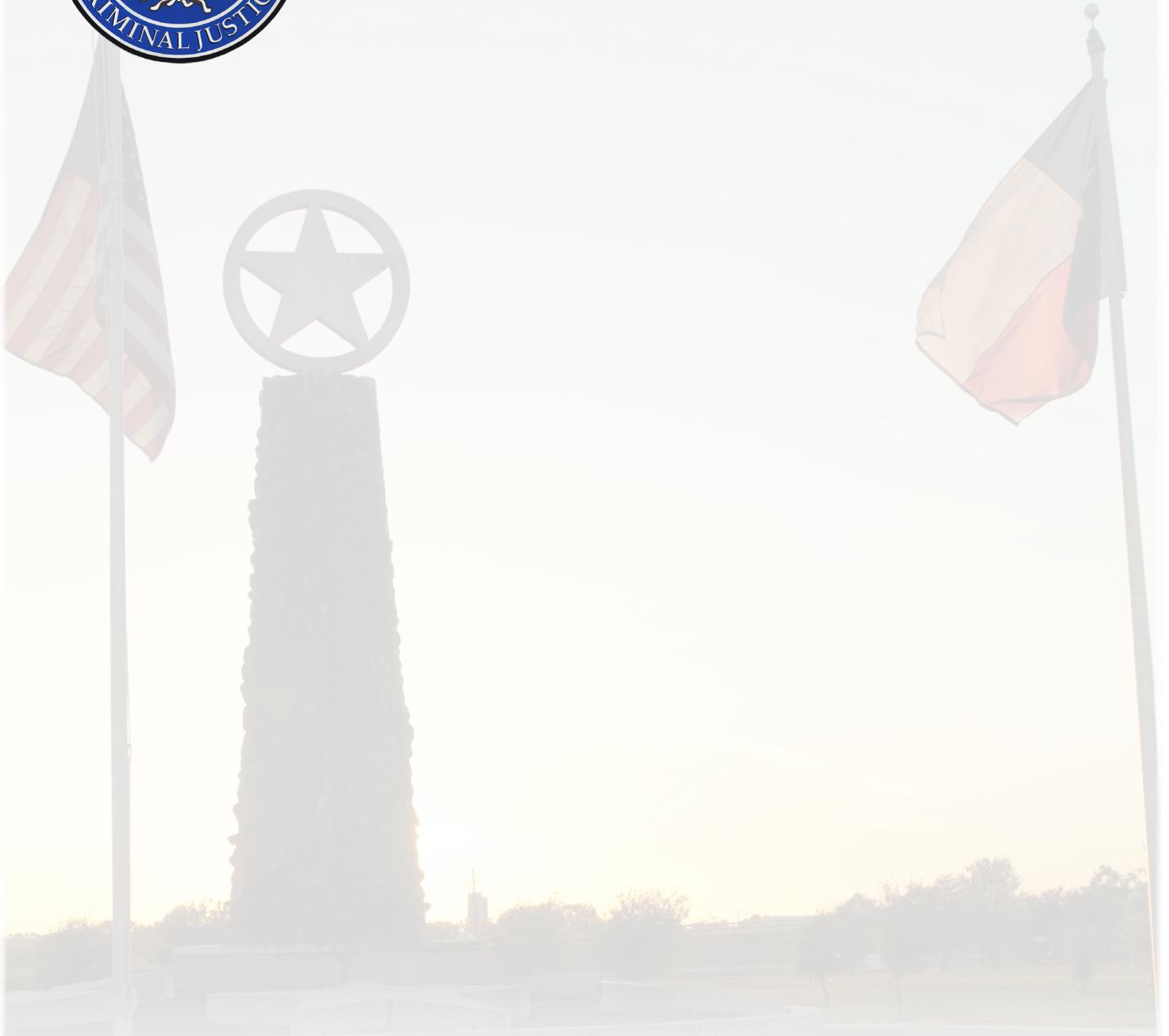


# Texas Department of Criminal Justice



## Parole Officer Caseload Study



September 2020

# Table of Contents

TDCJ Parole Division .....	1
Field Operations .....	1
Caseload Ratio.....	2
Caseload Type .....	3
Caseload Description Table.....	4
Caseload Review.....	5
Parole Officer Workload.....	5
Caseload Assessment .....	5

# PAROLE OFFICER CASELOAD STUDY

House Bill 4754 by the 86th Texas Legislature requires the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to conduct a study on 1) the average number of active releasees on a parole officer's caseload; 2) how the department factors the number of active releasees on a parole officer's caseload in determining its legislative appropriations request and budget; and 3) whether the department is accurately assessing the number of active releasees on a parole officer's caseload to ensure that the department receives an adequate amount of funding to employ a sufficient number of parole officers, and a parole officer is not overburdened or overworked based on the number of active releasees on the officer's caseload.

## TDCJ Parole Division

The mission of the Parole Division is to promote public safety and positive offender change through effective supervision, programs, and services.

The Parole Division supervises offenders released from prison who are serving out their sentences in Texas communities as parolees and mandatory supervision offenders. A person on parole is still in the legal custody of the state and remains under supervision for the remainder of his or her sentence.

The division also performs some pre-release functions by investigating the parole plans proposed by offenders and by tracking parole eligible cases and submitting them for timely consideration to the Board of Pardons and Paroles.

The division does not make release decisions, nor does it decide whose parole should be revoked or what special conditions should be placed on releasees. Authority for those decisions rests with the Board of Pardons and Paroles, but the division works closely with the board and provides board members with the documentation needed to make informed decisions.

## Field Operations

Field Operations are managed by the Parole Division. It involves direct oversight of offenders and is overseen by Region Directors in Dallas, Houston, Lubbock, San Antonio, and Tyler and includes staff in numerous district parole offices located in these regions.

There are 67 district parole offices serving Texas' 254 counties with an estimated 1,400 parole officers providing services to approximately 83,000 clients.

Texas Government Code 508.001 defines a Parole Officer as a person appointed by the director and assigned the duties of assessment of risks and needs, investigation, case management, and supervision of releasees to ensure that releasees are complying with the conditions of parole or mandatory supervision.

Parole Officers, specifically, are responsible for monitoring the activities of offenders and their compliance with the conditions of release. Parole officers may initiate intervention procedures when necessary.

Parole Officers and other field staff are responsible for investigating release plans prior to an offender’s release, for assessment and classification of the offender after release, for development of a supervision plan based on the needs of the offender, and for making appropriate referrals.

Parole Officers also investigate release plans prior to release, assess and classify parolees after release, and develop a supervision plan based on the needs of each offender. Supervision programs include substance abuse aftercare treatment, drug and alcohol testing, electronic monitoring, and sex offender treatment.

Parole Officers promote offender compliance with the conditions of release by supporting the use of interventions and motivational options, and they strive to enhance successful offender reintegration through services impacting the factors that contribute to recidivism.

In addition, field staff, when appropriate, work with the Board of Pardons and Paroles and its hearing officers in processing violations of release. Parole Officers also supervise parolees transferred from other states under the Interstate Compact.

## Caseload Ratio

The Legislative Appropriations Request for Strategy E.2.1., Parole Supervision, is established using a cost per offender day multiplied by the projected parole population for the next biennium as reported by the Legislative Budget Board. This cost per day includes parole officer salaries, support staff salaries, and operational costs associated with the supervision of a parolee. As population indicators show an increased population for the next biennium, the agency requests additional funding as an exceptional item. As populations decrease, the agency’s base request is adjusted to reduce funding. This methodology ensures that funding is proportionate to the parole population. A benchmark ratio of 62 to 1 is used to monitor parole officer caseloads. This performance measure is listed as a key measure in the agency’s bill pattern and is reported to the Legislative Budget Board on a quarterly basis.

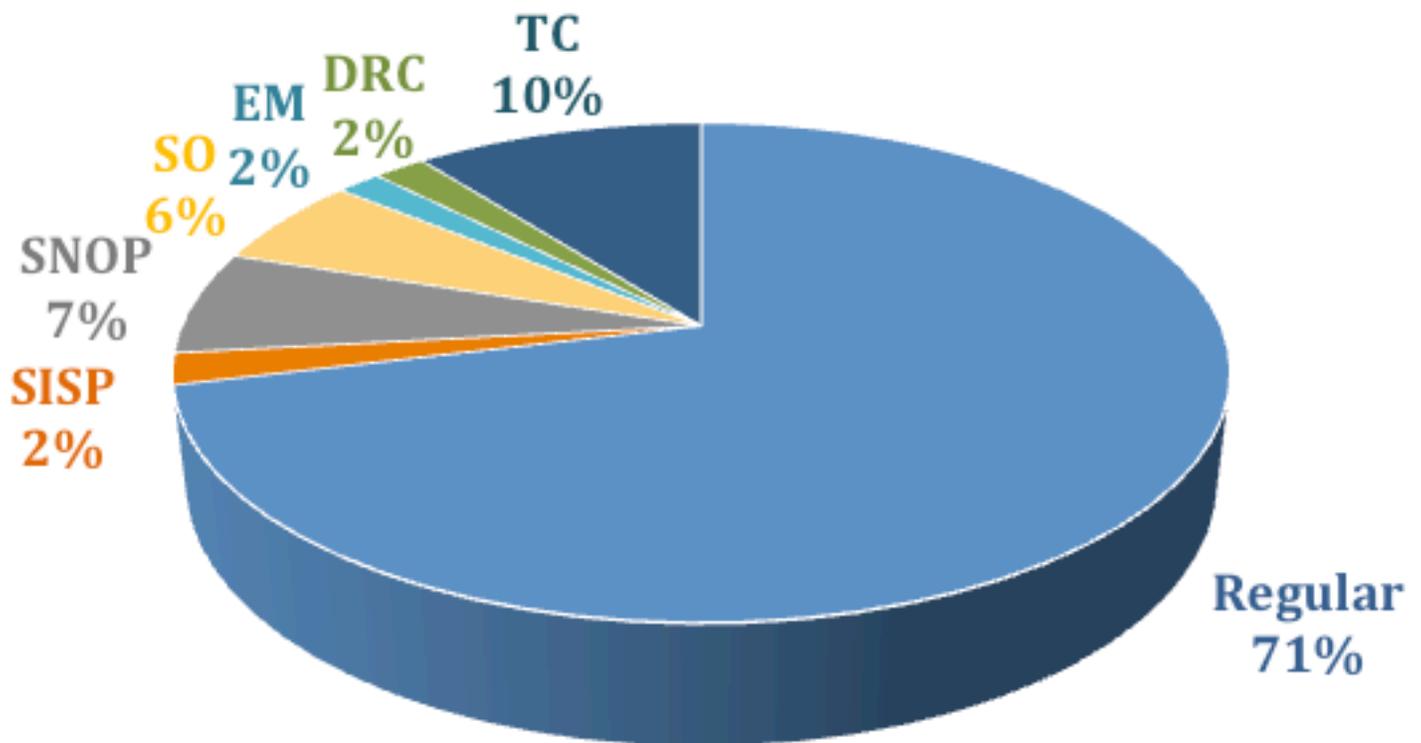
On June 30, 2020, the Parole Division had 83,423 clients that were supervised by 1,365 parole officers for a ratio of 61.1. Throughout FY2019, parole officer caseload ratios ranged between 61.1 and 62.7. Overall caseload ratios for prior years have been consistent and are reflected in the below chart:

Fiscal Year End	FY 2019	FY 2018	FY 2017	FY 2016	FY 2015	FY 2014	FY 2013	FY 2012	FY 2011	FY 2010
Ratio (All caseload types)	62.7	60.9	59.4	60.3	59.8	62	59.8	63.5	62.8	64.2

## Caseload Type

The Parole Division utilizes seven types of caseloads, defined as Regular, Super-Intensive Supervision Program (SISP), Special Needs Offender Program (SNOP), Sex Offender (SO), Electronic Monitoring (EM), District Reentry Center (DRC) and Therapeutic Community (TC). Each caseload has a defined caseload ratio as reported in the table below. Throughout FY 2019, parole officer ratios for all caseloads were within an acceptable range.

### PAROLE DIVISION CASELOADS AS OF 6/2020



A brief description of each caseload type is listed in the following table.

CASELOAD	ACRONYM	CLIENT TYPE	RATIO
Regular	N/A	Consists of clients who do not meet criteria for any specialized caseload.	75:1
Super Intensive Supervision Program	SISP	Consists of clients with a board-imposed condition requiring the client to be monitored by a Global Positioning System (GPS) tracker.	14:1
Special Needs Offender Program	SNOP	Consists of clients identified to have special needs due to mental impairment, Intellectual Disability Disorder or who are Terminally Ill/Physically Handicapped, allowing for increased continuum of care.	45:1
Sex Offender	SO	Consists of clients who are convicted of current or past sexual offenses or have a current non-sexual offense with a sexual element who have undergone appropriate due process procedures.	30:1
Electronic Monitoring	EM	Consists of clients with a board-imposed special condition requiring the client to be monitored by an electronic tracking device, using radio frequency technology.	25:1
District Reentry Center	DRC	Consists of clients not already assigned to other specialized caseloads who have requirements for various types of programming due to board voted special conditions. Examples include, but are not limited to, programs such as Anger Management, Batterer's Intervention and Prevention Program or Cognitive Skills classes.	75:1
Therapeutic Community	TC	Consists of clients with substance abuse problems who have participated in certain substance abuse programs while incarcerated or as parole modifications, allowing for increased continuum of care.	75:1

## **Caseload Review**

Throughout the year parole officer caseloads are regularly monitored by supervisory staff. Daily, supervisors account for cases that are arriving upon offender releases from the TDCJ's Correctional Institutions Division (CID) or as intrastate or interstate transfers. Supervisors analyze caseload numbers to ensure a balance of offenders are spread throughout officers' caseloads.

This evaluation of officer caseloads is conducted utilizing real-time computer-generated reports that allow supervisors to evaluate officer caseloads as often as necessary to create equitable caseloads. These reports include changes that occur throughout the month (e.g., releases, discharges, deaths, etc.) that contribute to accurate distribution of cases.

## **Parole Officer Workload**

The department continuously monitors parole officer caseloads and responds accordingly to any increases in the offender population.

A monthly review of all district parole offices is completed by the Deputy Director of Field Operations to determine if the number of parole officers assigned is adequate to supervise the number of clients assigned to each parole office. Parole officer caseloads can vary due to vacancies and employees being out of the office for extended periods of time while taking various types of leaves such as Family Medical Leave or Military Leave. When the need for additional officers exists, the department increases the number of allotted parole officer positions.

## **Caseload Assessment**

Texas Government Code 508.1142 was added by the 80th Legislature in 2007, which establishes guidelines for a maximum caseload for parole officers by type of caseload. If the department is unable to meet the maximum caseload guidelines, the department shall submit a report to the Legislative Budget Board at the end of each fiscal year in which the department fails to meet the guidelines, stating the amount of money needed by the department to meet the guidelines.

These statutory guidelines suggest lower caseload ratios, ranging from a high of 60 to 1 to a low of 11 to 1 based on caseload type, than what is currently used by the Division as detailed in the preceding discussion.

The annual report to the Legislative Budget Board required by this law which was submitted by the TDCJ for fiscal year 2019 reflects the need for an additional 703 parole officers at a cost of approximately \$61.1 million annually in order to achieve caseload ratios according to these recommended guidelines.

Evidence of effective caseload management is shown in the January 2019 Legislative Budget Board's Statewide Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recidivism and Revo-

cation Rates. According to this report, recidivism rates have steadily declined over the last decade with the most recent recidivism rate being 20.30%. This same report indicates revocation rates remain low at 7.8%.

The TDCJ will continue to monitor caseload ratios monthly to ensure effective supervision of clients is maintained.



## Parole Officer Caseload

*Produced by*

**THE  
TEXAS DEPARTMENT  
OF  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

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