

Validated Gang Members
Returning to Durham County from Prison
(2013 – 2015)



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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to examine demographic, incarceration and criminal history data surrounding inmates who return to Durham County, North Carolina with an SRG (Security Risk Group) designation. The SRG designation indicates that the inmate was classified as a validated gang member by the North Carolina Department of Public Safety while incarcerated.

Background

Approximately 700 individuals return to Durham County (DCO) from North Carolina state prisons each year. Approximately 9% of those released are validated gang members. This group of validated gang members is referred to as the Security Risk Group (SRG). The table below illustrates the number of North Carolina state prison releases to Durham County for calendar years 2013, 2014 and 2015, and the number of validated gang members within that group. Noteworthy is the decline in released prisoners in 2015 who were validated gang members.

Year	All Releases to DCO	Validated Gang Members (SRG's)	SRG Percentage
2013	757	76	10.0%
2014	680	70	10.3%
2015	686	49	7.1%

All but one of the validated gang members returning to Durham County were male (194 of 195), and the great majority (180 of 195, or 92%) were identified as "Black/African".

There are two conditions under which validated gang members are released from North Carolina state prisons, "expiration of sentence" and "returned to parole". The table below provides information on release reasons. A significantly higher percentage were released on parole in 2014 and 2015 than in 2013.

Year	Expiration of Sentence	Expiration Percentage	Return to Parole	Return to Parole Percentage
2013	29	38.2%	47	61.8%
2014	11	15.7%	59	84.3%
2015	12	24.5%	37	75.5%

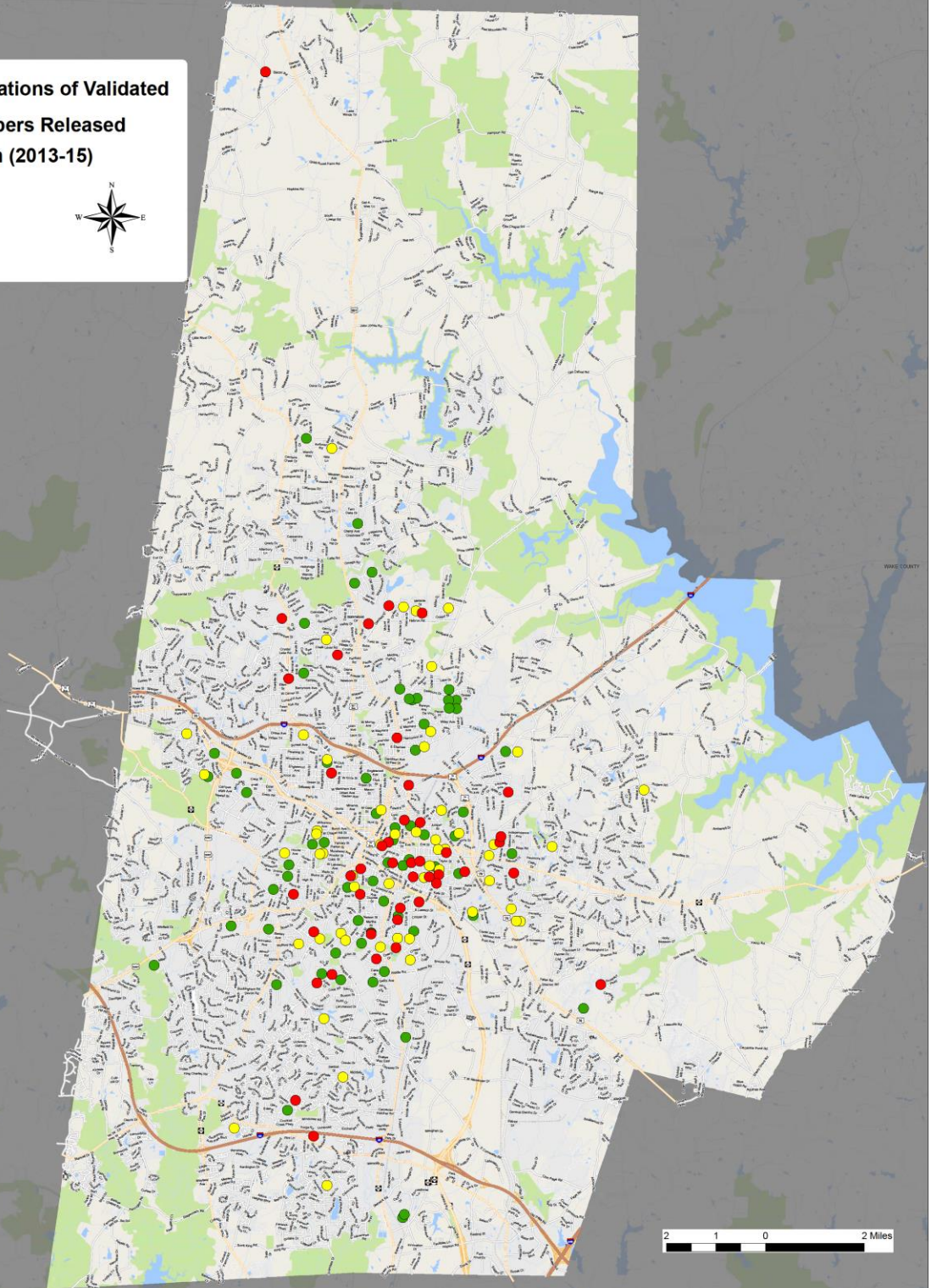
Locations Where SRG's Reside in Durham County after Prison Release

Geocoding of addresses indicates that validated gang members settle in locations throughout Durham County upon release. With little exception, they live in incorporated parts of the county. An examination of resettlement locations shows some variance from year-to-year, however, most tend to live in the more densely populated census tracts. The largest cluster is in an area generally bordered by Interstate 85 to the north, Cornwallis Road to the south, Highway 70 to the east and Highway 15-501 to the west. The following pages contain a resettlement map of Durham County and a resettlement map of central Durham. Additional analysis is needed to determine the impact of returning offenders to these neighborhoods. Many resettlement locations are in areas of high poverty and crime rates, characteristics that may increase the likelihood of new criminal activity.

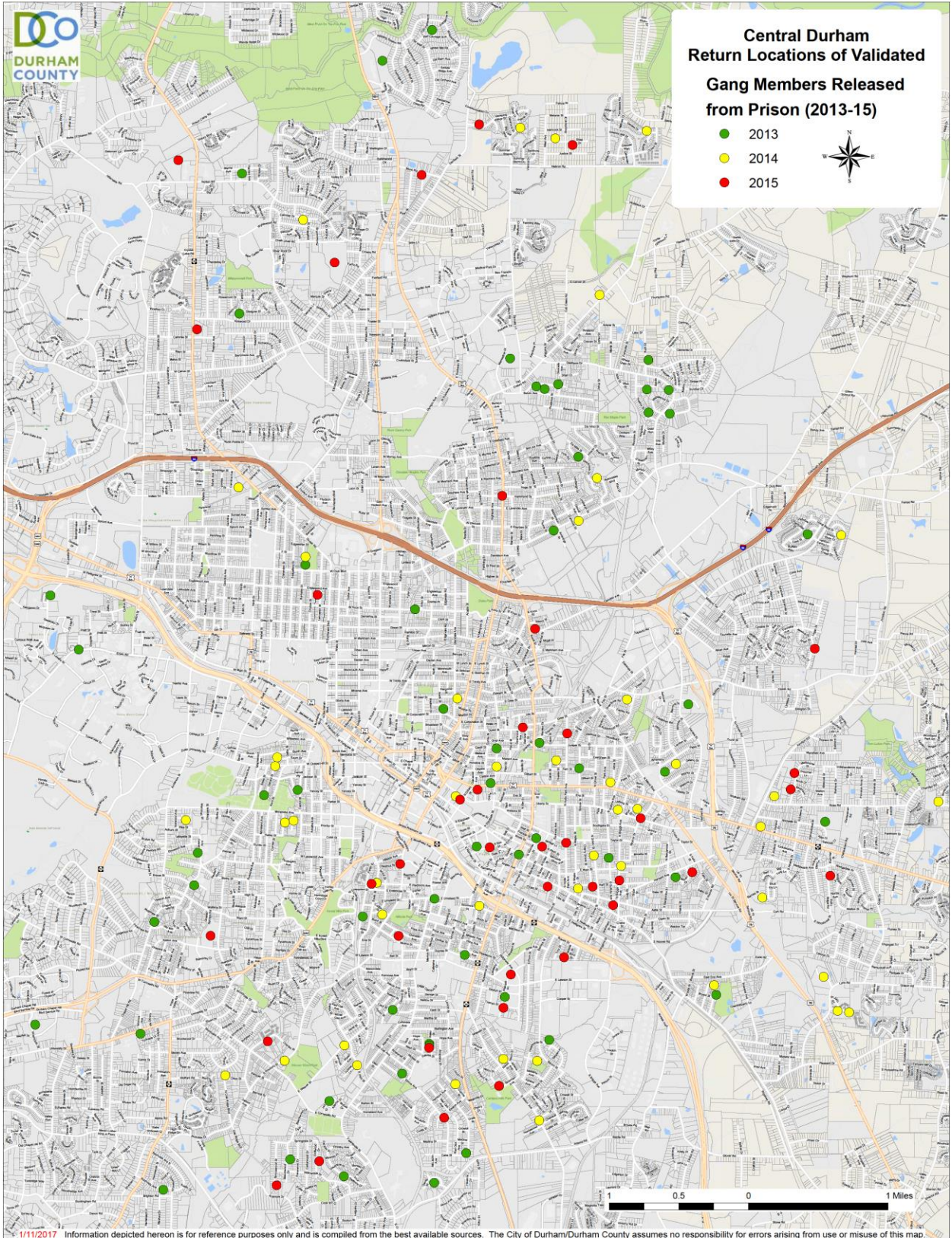


**Return Locations of Validated
Gang Members Released
from Prison (2013-15)**

- 2013
- 2014
- 2015



1/11/2017 Information depicted hereon is for reference purposes only and is compiled from the best available sources. The City of Durham/Durham County assumes no responsibility for errors arising from use or misuse of this map.



The Gang Validation Process in NC Prisons

The NC Department of Public Safety/Division of Adult Corrections conducts the validation process at prisons such as Polk Correctional Institution in Butner, NC., and maintains databases used to identify and track gang members who are incarcerated or under supervision within North Carolina communities.

The validation process is completed at intake, and those who are validated all go in as “associates”. There are three threat levels, and the level is typically adjusted based on disciplinary charges. Level 3 inmates (the highest threat level) have significant limitations on visits and phone calls.

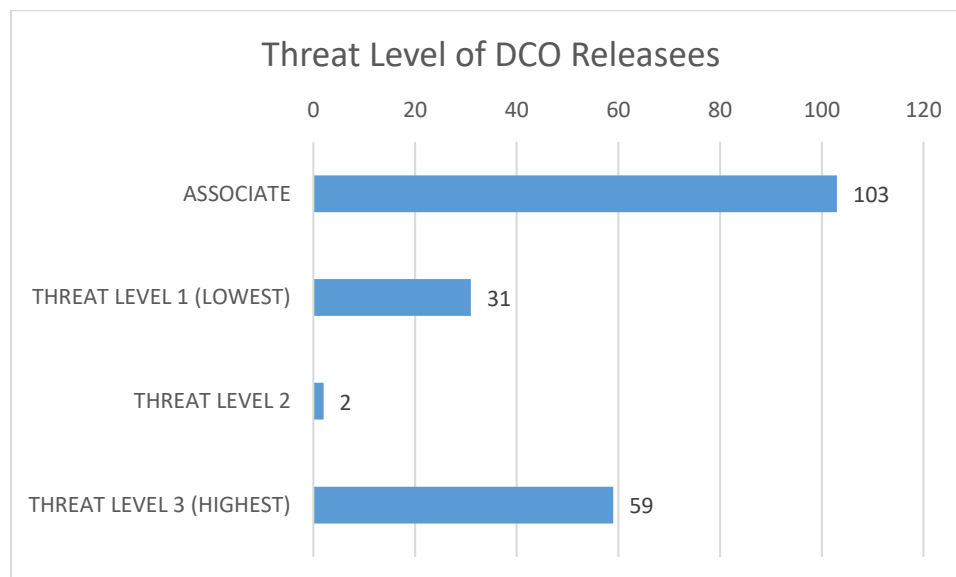
There are several documents related to the validation process. These include:

- Central Region STG Validation Request Checklist
- Validation Form Letter from Intel to the C.I. Administrator
- Validation Form Letter from STGIO to Inmate
- Security Threat Group Interview Form
- Division of Prisons STG Member Validation Worksheet
- Physical Screening Form (showing scars, marks, tattoos etc.)

Enhancements to the validation process have recently been put in place. Corrections staff now have more digital information available such as pictures of the subject, photos of tattoos, a copy of the letter of validation to the inmate, reasons for validation and other searchable data. The system is paperless with data being computerized making it easier for law enforcement to access. Accuracy of data is ensured through a system of accountability (person entering the data is part of the record) and all validations are justified. The current roster and levels can be run at any time.

Threat Level of SRG’s released to Durham County

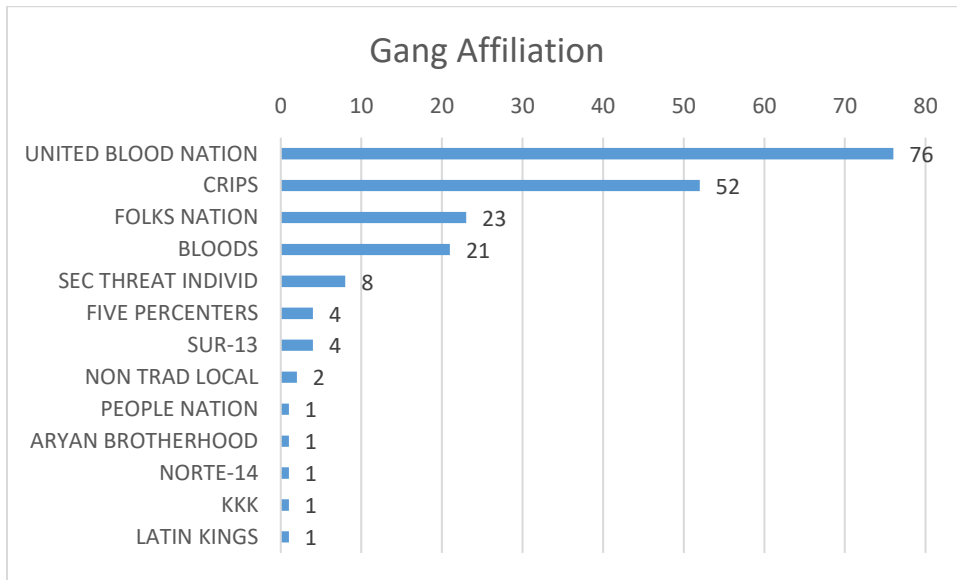
The chart below illustrates the STG level of validated inmates released to Durham County in from 2013 to 2015. As noted above, all inmates are validated at an “associate” level, and levels only change based on disciplinary charges while incarcerated. As seen below, 59 of the group were at the highest threat level, and thus had the most restrictions while incarcerated.



Data indicates that those released at the highest threat (Level 3) have a much higher level of recidivism (63%) within one year than Level 1 (39%) or Associate (43%) offenders. Level 2 offenders had a recidivism level of 100%, but there were only two in this cohort. Recidivism in this report is defined as being arrested for a non-traffic charge within 12 months of release.

Gang Affiliation of SRG’s released to Durham County

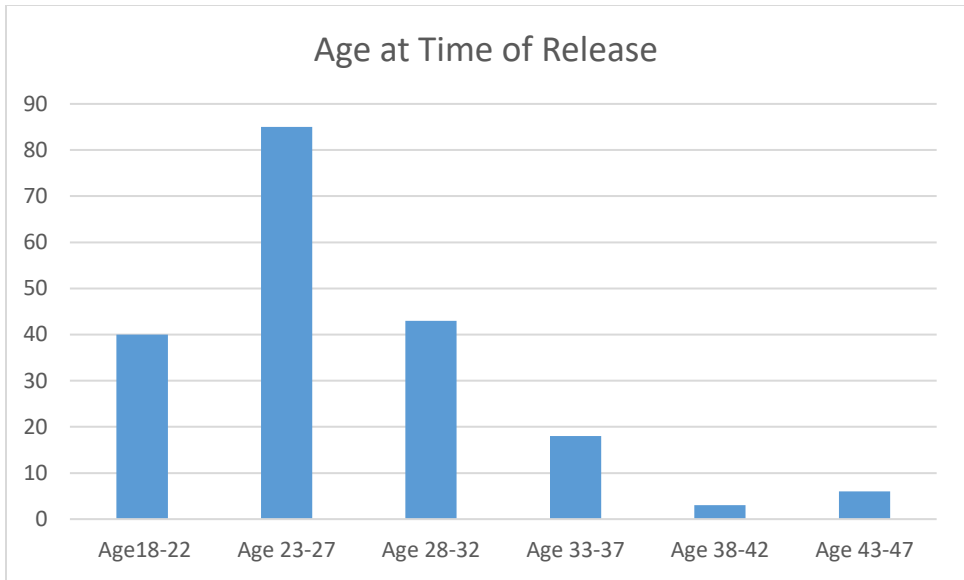
The 195 individuals released to Durham County with an SRG designation between 2013 and 2015 belonged to 13 different gangs. The chart below illustrates gang membership. Membership in the United Blood Nation or the Bloods comprised 50% of the cohort followed by the Crips at 27%.



Age Criteria for SRG’s released to Durham County

The age range for validated gang members released to Durham County was between 18 and 47, with the average being 26.7 years old. The chart below indicates that the greatest number of those released are between the ages of 23 and 27. The most common age (mode) was 24.

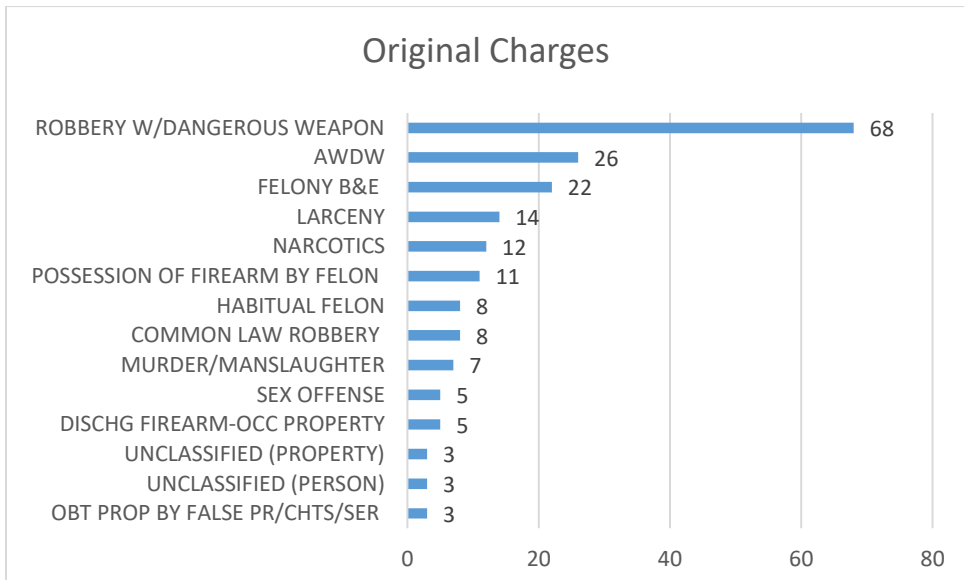
Data indicates that those released at a younger age are more likely to be arrested again within one year. The average age of those who picked up a new charge was 26.2 and the average age of those not picking up a new charge was 28.1.



Original Charges Resulting in Incarceration

Validated gang members were incarcerated on a variety of charges. The chart below illustrates the *primary charge* which resulted in the most recent period of incarceration. Many were imprisoned on multiple charges, or had multiple charges consolidated.

The most common charge is “robbery with a dangerous weapon”, which accounted for 35% of all original charges.



Arrests within One Year of Release

One purpose of this report is to measure recidivism of validated gang members who return to Durham County from state prisons. Recidivism for this report is defined as being arrested within 12 months of release from prison, where the arrest was for something other than a traffic charge. Only arrests occurring in Durham County are considered.

Recidivism data for this cohort (SRG's) is not readily available, and perhaps not collected. The North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission cites rates¹ for all returning offenders, but those rates are tied to a 2-year review, making comparison to this report difficult. Perhaps more useful for comparison is an analysis by the City of Charlotte that studies a random sample of 3,169 offenders who returned to Mecklenburg County from prison.² In that study, 35% of returning offenders picked up new charges within 12 months, the time frame also used in this report.

In Durham County there is some variation between years when considering recidivism of returning gang members. That percentage ranges from 46% in 2013 to 61% in 2015. The average for all three years considered is 49% (compared to 35% in the Charlotte study of all returning offenders).

Year	# of SRG's released to Durham County	# of SRG's with new charges within 1 year	% of SRG's with new charges within 1 year
2013	76	35	46%
2014	70	30	43%
2015	49	30	61%
TOTAL	195	95	49%

Based on this data, it appears that those released as an SRG are more likely to be arrested on a new charge than those released who are not in the Security Threat group.

Length of Incarceration Prior to Release

North Carolina Department of Public Safety records were used to determine the number of months SRG's served prior to their release.³ Only the most recent incarceration term was used. Some individuals served previous time in prison, were released, and then were sent to prison again at some point. These previous stints were not counted.

The number of months incarcerated were coded into five groups for analysis. These categories were:

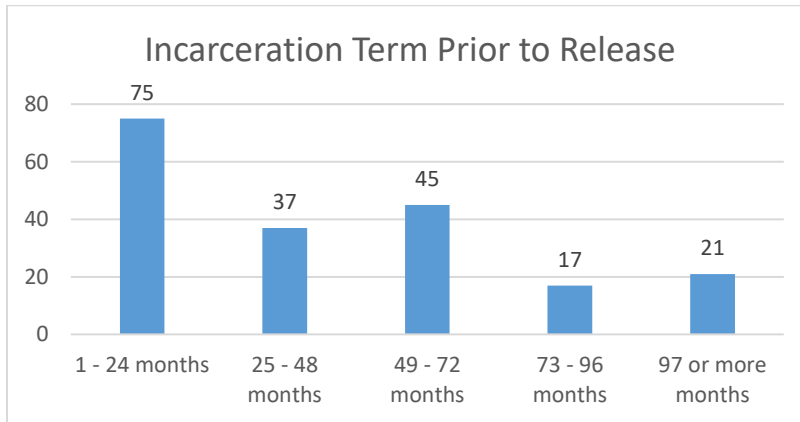
1. 0 to 24 months
2. 25 to 48 months
3. 49 to 72 months

¹ North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission Correctional Program Evaluation: *Offenders Placed on Probation or Released from Prison in FY 2013*; Submitted Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 164-47 (2015) April 15, 2016

² City of Charlotte, *Recidivism Rates – NC DOT Prisoners Released To Mecklenburg County 2009 - 2011*

³ Incarceration terms ranged from 1 month to 204 months

4. 73 to 96 months
5. 97 or more months



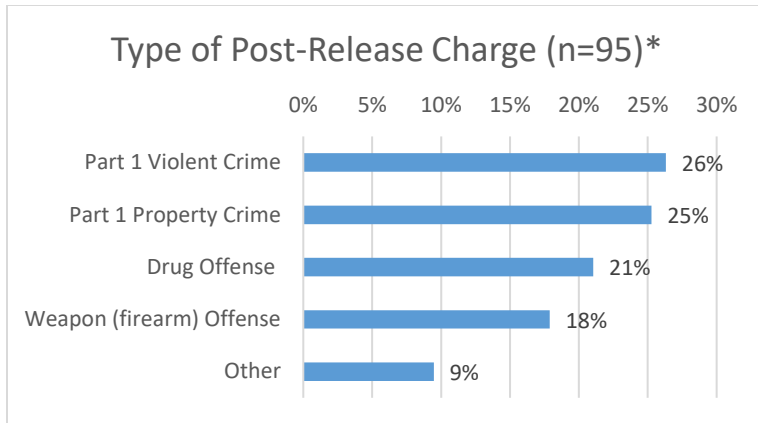
Types of Post-Release Charges

As noted above, almost half of those released as an SRG were arrested again within one year of release.⁴ Information regarding these charges was found in public arrest records and in data made available by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). Many subjects were arrested more than once, or had several charges related to one arrest (for example, a drug charge and a weapon charge). No effort was made to determine the percentage of those with multiple charges, however, as part of this research the *most serious charge* was identified where possible.

The chart below illustrates types of post-release charges. Due to the variety of charges, crimes were coded into five categories. The categories are:

1. Part 1 Violent Crime (homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault)
2. Part 1 Property Crime (burglary, larceny, auto theft)
3. Drug Offense
4. Weapon Offense (involving a firearm)
5. Other Charge (includes charges considered minor, such as traffic offenses, misdemeanors etc.)

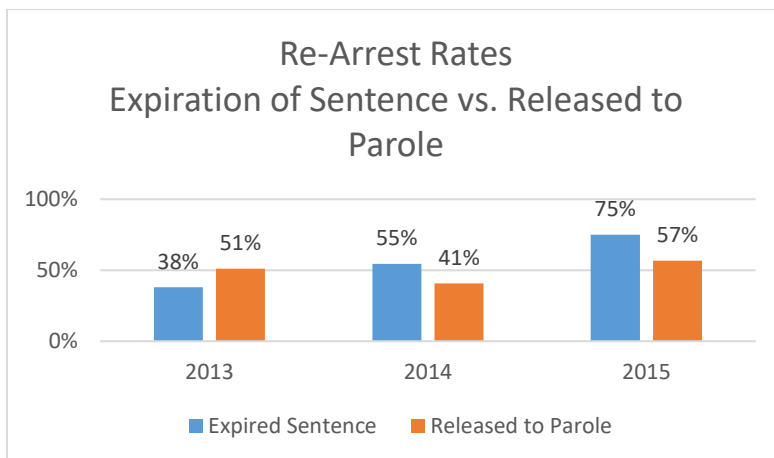
⁴ These are arrests only; in some cases, the charges may be dropped and in other cases the defendant may be found innocent in a court of law



* shows the most serious charge only

Impact of Release Conditions

As previously noted, there are two conditions under which validated gang members are released from North Carolina state prisons, “expiration of sentence” and “returned to parole”. There is very minimal variance in re-arrest rates of the two groups. Those who were released because their sentence expired were re-arrested at the rate of 50% (26 of 52) and the rate for those who were paroled was 48% (69 of 143) over the 3-year period. Based on available data, it appears that release condition has minimal effect on re-arrest rates for SRG’s released to Durham County between 2013 and 2015.



Summary

Approximately 700 individuals return to Durham from North Carolina prisons each year. Between 2013 and 2015 around 10% of these individuals were validated as gang members (Security Risk Group, or SRG’s) while they were in prison. Based on available data, SRG’s are arrested at a higher rate within one

year of release than individuals who are not identified as gang members. This report examines a variety of factors surrounding the imprisonment and release of SRG's including age, race, threat level, gang affiliation, resettlement location and subsequent criminal charges.