There were 80,035 cases reported to the United States Sentencing Commission in fiscal year 2013.

Of these cases, 22,215 involved drug trafficking.\(^1\)

24.1% of drug trafficking offenses involved powder cocaine.

In fiscal year 2013, the courts reported 5,358 powder cocaine cases to the Commission. These cases accounted for 24.1% of all offenders sentenced under the drug trafficking guidelines. The number of powder cocaine cases has remained relatively stable for the past five years.

**Offender and Offense Characteristics**
- In fiscal year 2013, most offenders convicted of powder cocaine trafficking were male (89.9%).
- More than half of the offenders were Hispanic (58.0%) followed by Black (31.5%), White (9.4%), and Other Races (1.1%).
- The average age of these offenders at sentencing was 36 years.
- Most powder cocaine traffickers were United States citizens (70.5%).
- Over half of powder cocaine traffickers had little or no prior criminal history (57.0% of these offenders were assigned to Criminal History Category I).
- The median base offense level in these cases was 30. This corresponds to a quantity of drugs between 7.7 and 11.0 pounds of powder cocaine.

**Sentence Length of Powder Cocaine Trafficking Offenders**
- Powder cocaine trafficking sentences were increased for:
  - 18.2% of offenders because the offense involved the possession of a weapon;
  - 8.4% of offenders for having a leadership or supervisory role in the offense.
- Powder cocaine trafficking sentences were decreased for:
  - 16.4% of offenders because they were a minor or minimal participant in the offense;
  - Slightly more than one-third (36.3%) of offenders because they met the safety valve criteria in the sentencing guidelines.

**Punishment**
- Most powder cocaine trafficking offenders were sentenced to imprisonment (97.4%).
- The average sentence length for powder cocaine traffickers was 79 months.
- Most powder cocaine traffickers were convicted of a drug offense carrying a mandatory minimum penalty (74.8%).
  - However, nearly 60 percent (59.4%) of these offenders were not subject to any mandatory minimum penalty at sentencing because:
    - 18.5% provided the government with substantial assistance in the investigation or prosecution of other offenders, 29.7% were eligible for relief through the statutory safety valve provision, and 11.2% received both forms of relief.
Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range

- The rate of within range sentences for powder cocaine trafficking cases has decreased slightly over the last five years from 47.2% in fiscal year 2009 to 44.7% in fiscal year 2013.

- In each of the last five years, approximately 35 percent of powder cocaine trafficking offenders received a sentence below the applicable guideline range because the government sponsored the below range sentence.
  - Substantial assistance departures were granted in approximately one-quarter of powder cocaine trafficking cases over the past five years.
    - In fiscal year 2013, these offenders received an average reduction in their sentence of 48.8%.
  - A small but growing proportion of powder cocaine traffickers received a below range sentence sponsored by the government for reasons other than substantial assistance or participation in an Early Disposition Program.
    - Other government sponsored below range sentences have increased over the past five years from 3.8% in fiscal year 2009 to 6.2% in fiscal year 2013.
      - In fiscal year 2013, these offenders received an average reduction in their sentence of 31.1%.

- Over the last five years, the rate of non-government sponsored below range sentences for powder cocaine traffickers has increased from 16.3% in fiscal year 2009 to 18.5% in fiscal year 2013.
  - In fiscal year 2013, these offenders received an average reduction in their sentence of 35.0%.

- The average guideline minimum and average sentence imposed for powder cocaine traffickers have remained stable, decreasing only slightly in the past five years.
  - The average guideline minimum decreased from 105 to 102 months during that period;
  - The average sentence imposed decreased from 83 to 79 months.

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