

▶ THERE WERE 71,003 CASES REPORTED TO THE UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION IN FISCAL YEAR 2015.

▶ OF THESE CASES, 19,792 INVOLVED DRUG TRAFFICKING.<sup>1</sup>

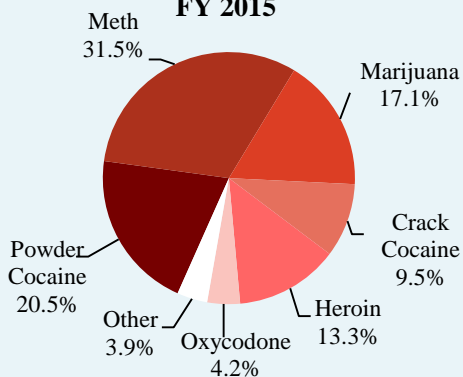
▶ SIX DRUG TYPES ACCOUNT FOR NEARLY ALL DRUG TRAFFICKING OFFENSES.

# Quick Facts



## Drug Trafficking Offenses

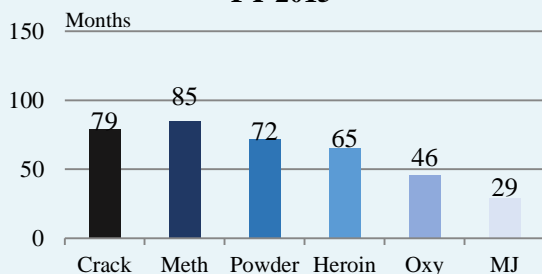
**Distribution of Drug Types  
FY 2015**



**Top Five Districts  
Drug Trafficking Offenders  
FY 2015**

Western District of Texas (N=1,383)
District of Arizona (N=1,073)
Southern District of California (N=1,065)
Southern District of Texas (N=1,064)
Southern District of New York (N=691)

**Average Sentence Length  
FY 2015**



There have been many changes made to the drug guidelines in recent years, with fiscal year 2015 reflecting the most recent changes made to the drug quantity table for all drug types. The information presented below provides an overview of drug trafficking offenses, though this information may vary depending on the type of drug involved in the offense.

### Offender and Offense Characteristics<sup>2</sup>

- In fiscal year 2015, the majority of drug trafficking offenders were male (85.2%).
- Almost half of the offenders were Hispanic (48.4%) followed by White (24.3%), Black (24.2%), and Other Races (3.1%), although this rate varied by drug type.
- The average age of these offenders at sentencing was 35 years.
- Approximately three-quarters of all drug trafficking offenders were United States citizens (74.6%), although this rate varied substantially depending on the type of drug involved.
- Almost half (48.0%) of drug traffickers had little or no prior criminal history (i.e., were assigned to Criminal History Category I).
- Drug trafficking sentences were increased for:
  - ◆ 17.3% of offenders because the offense involved the possession of a weapon;
  - ◆ 7.8% of offenders for having a leadership or supervisory role in the offense.
- Drug trafficking sentences were decreased for:
  - ◆ 16.8% of offenders because they were a minor or minimal participant in the offense;
  - ◆ 32.2% of offenders because they met the safety valve criteria in the sentencing guidelines.

### Punishment

- Most drug trafficking offenders were sentenced to imprisonment (95.5%).
- More than three-quarters of drug traffickers were sentenced either within the guideline range (36.1%) or below the range at the government's request (39.9%). An additional 22.5% of drug traffickers received a non-government sponsored below range sentence, with the remaining 1.4% of offenders sentenced above the guideline range.
- The average sentence for drug trafficking offenders was 66 months. The average sentence varied depending on the type of drug trafficked in the offense.
- 46.9% of all drug trafficking offenders were convicted of an offense carrying a mandatory minimum penalty; however, less than half of these offenders (49.4%) remained subject to that penalty at sentencing.
  - ◆ 22.4% provided the government with substantial assistance in the investigation or prosecution of other offenders, 19.6% were eligible for relief through the statutory safety valve provision, and 8.6% received both forms of relief.

<sup>1</sup> Drug trafficking offenses include cases with complete guideline application information in which the offender was sentenced under USSG §§2D1.1 (Drug Trafficking), 2D1.2 (Protected Locations), 2D1.5 (Continuing Criminal Enterprise), 2D1.6 (Use of a Communication Facility), 2D1.8 (Rent/Manage Drug Establishment), 2D1.10 (Endangering Human Life), or 2D1.14 (Narco-Terrorism).

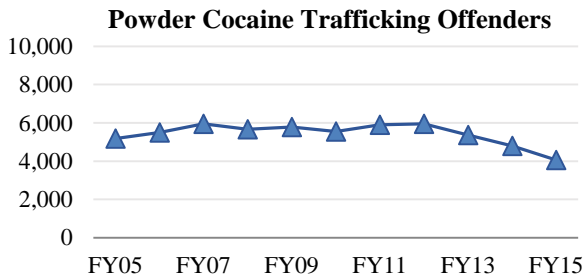
<sup>2</sup> Offender and offense characteristics as well as the length of punishment differ by primary drug type. Separate Quick Facts publications are available for each primary drug type at [www.ussc.gov/Quick\\_Facts](http://www.ussc.gov/Quick_Facts).

# Quick Facts

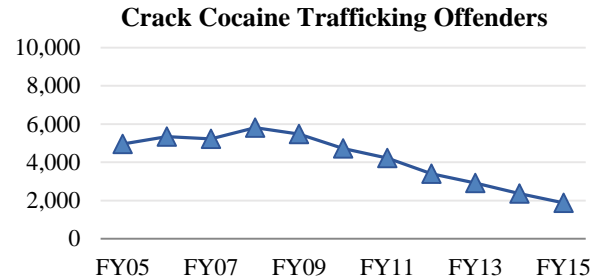
## Drug Trafficking Offenses

Six drug types accounted for 96.1% of drug trafficking offenses in fiscal year 2015.

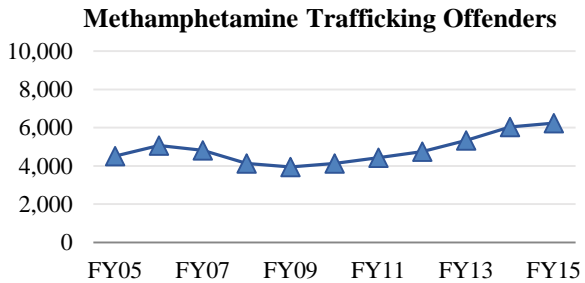
The number of powder cocaine traffickers had been relatively stable until a steady decline began in fiscal year 2013.



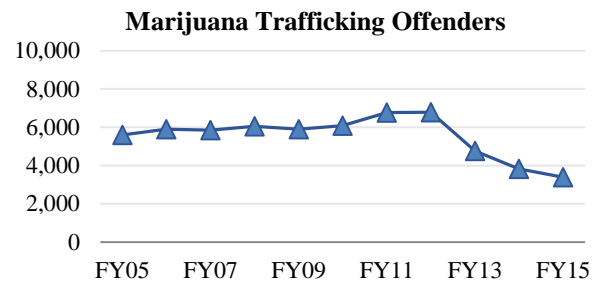
The number of crack cocaine traffickers has decreased substantially since fiscal year 2008 when reductions in crack cocaine penalties were first implemented.



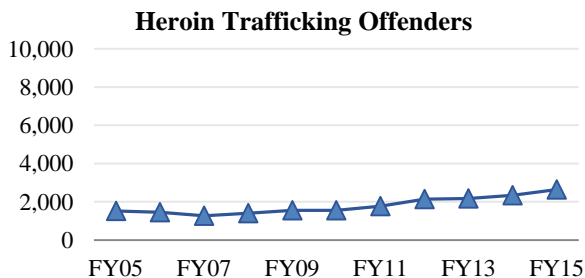
The number of methamphetamine traffickers decreased after fiscal year 2006, but has been increasing since fiscal year 2009.



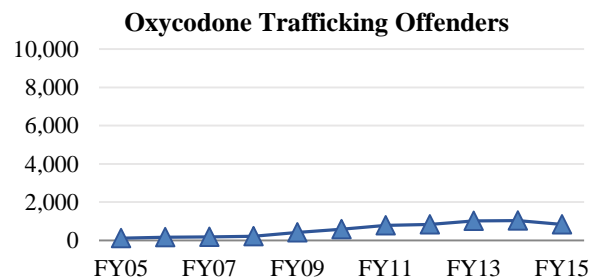
The number of marijuana traffickers rose slightly over time until a sharp decline in fiscal year 2013 and the number continues to decrease.



The number of heroin traffickers has been slowly increasing since fiscal year 2007.



Although the number of oxycodone traffickers remains low compared to most other drug types, there have been modest increases in each year since fiscal year 2005 with the exception of fiscal year 2015.



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