

Spatial Distribution of COVID-19 Population Reduction

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Purpose

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Corrections was directed by Governor Jay Inslee on April 15, 2020 to identify “incarcerated individuals for potential release through Rapid Reentry, furlough, commutation, or emergency medical release, as eligible and needed” (Proclamation 20-50). Subsequently, 950 individuals were released or transferred to partial confinement under the Governor’s proclamation, and 66 under the Secretary’s furlough authority (1,016 in total), between April 17 and May 15, 2020.¹ This brief report describes the distributions of: 1) individuals released or transferred through emergency commutation, Rapid Reentry or furlough, and 2) those who have since been charged with a new offense, placed on active warrant status, or have otherwise violated the conditions of their supervision (such as drug use, GPS violations, having unauthorized visitors in the approved residence or failure to report/contact the community corrections officer when directed). Most of these will return to the community after their custody violation hearings.

Data Source(s): OMNI as of September 18, 2021; Office of Financial Management (OFM) population estimates of April 1, 2020; Washington Master Addressing Services (WAMAS)

Methods

Participants

Maps include all individuals released or transferred through emergency commutation, Rapid Reentry (RRE) or furlough with a Washington residential address. Allegations of a new offense or violation are limited to those known to the Department of Corrections through admission, warrant, infraction and violation records in the OMNI and IMRS databases. Unless otherwise noted, all records are of status prior to adjudication, and do not necessarily reflect trial or hearings outcomes.

Analytic Approach

Following a description of population demographics, individuals are mapped by release or transfer type (e.g., commutation, RRE, or furlough) and their most recent known address. Maps include a measure of density of the number of released or transferred individuals residing within a one-mile radius of each individual address. Maps of individuals charged with a new offense or violation, or placed on active warrant status, indicate areas of elevated risk where their density is significantly greater than that of their respective cohort.

¹ Lists and population descriptions for released and transferred individuals are available online at <https://www.doc.wa.gov/news/covid-19-faq.htm>

Results

Population Demographics:

Demographic description of individuals released or transferred for COVID-19 population reduction are shown in Table 1 along with the total prison population as of March 31, 2020.

Table 1. Characteristics of individuals released or transferred for COVID-19 population reduction and total prison population on March 31, 2020.

	COVID-19 Population Reduction (<i>N</i> = 1,016)	Prison Population on March 31, 2020 (<i>N</i> = 17,205)
Age		
<i>Under 22</i>	28 (2.8%)	483 (2.8%)
<i>22 – 30</i>	313 (30.8%)	3,900 (22.7%)
<i>31 – 40</i>	372 (36.6%)	5,831 (33.9%)
<i>41 - 50</i>	186 (18.3%)	3,550 (20.6%)
<i>51 - 60</i>	91 (9.0%)	2,269 (13.2%)
<i>Over 60</i>	26 (2.6%)	1,172 (6.8%)
Sex		
<i>Male</i>	851 (83.8%)	15,903 (92.4%)
<i>Female</i>	165 (16.2%)	1,302 (7.6%)
Race		
<i>White</i>	769 (75.7%)	11,981 (69.6%)
<i>Black</i>	128 (12.6%)	3,035 (17.6%)
<i>American Indian or Alaska Native</i>	72 (7.1%)	1,011 (5.9%)
<i>Asian or Pacific Islander</i>	38 (3.7%)	732 (4.3%)
<i>Other</i>	9 (0.9%)	446 (2.6%)
Hispanic Origin	125 (12.3%)	2,492 (14.5%)

Commutations:

Between April 17 and May 4, 2020, 422 individuals were released by emergency commutation. Figure 1 shows the distribution of those released with a residential address in the state of Washington ($n = 405$).²

Figure 1. Individuals released by emergency commutation (n = 405).

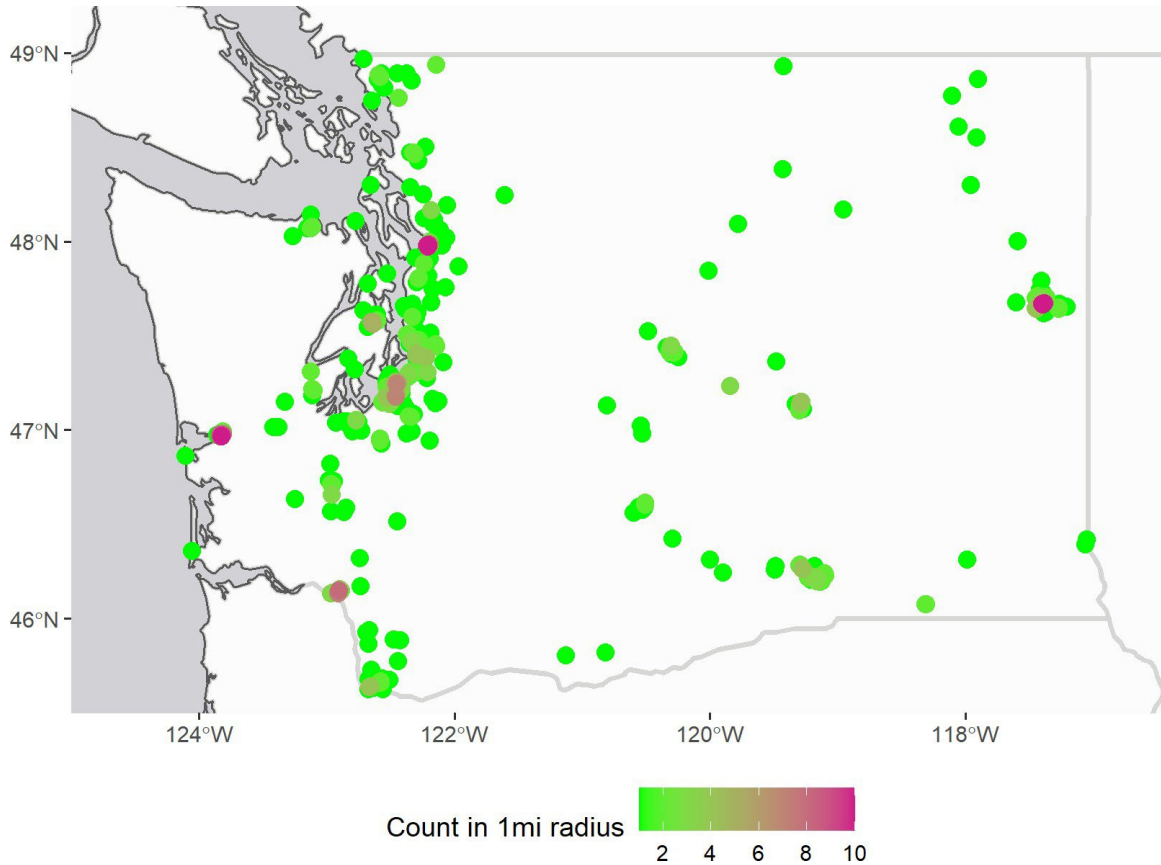


Table 1. Individuals released by emergency commutation by city of release.

City	Individuals	Percent of Commutations	Percent of WA Population
Tacoma	40	9.9%	2.8%
Spokane	34	8.4%	2.9%
Everett	20	5.0%	1.5%
Vancouver	18	4.5%	2.5%
Seattle	14	3.5%	9.9%
Aberdeen	12	3.0%	0.2%

² 17 individuals with commuted sentences released out of state, identified as homeless, or had an address not included in the Washington Master Address System.

City	Individuals	Percent of Commutations	Percent of WA Population
Kennewick	12	3.0%	1.1%
Bremerton	10	2.5%	0.6%
Kelso	10	2.5%	0.5%
Moses Lake	10	2.5%	0.3%

NOTE: The table includes cities with 10 or more individuals released by commutation. City share of statewide population reflects most recent estimates available from Washington State Office of Financial Management.

New offenses, violations and warrants:

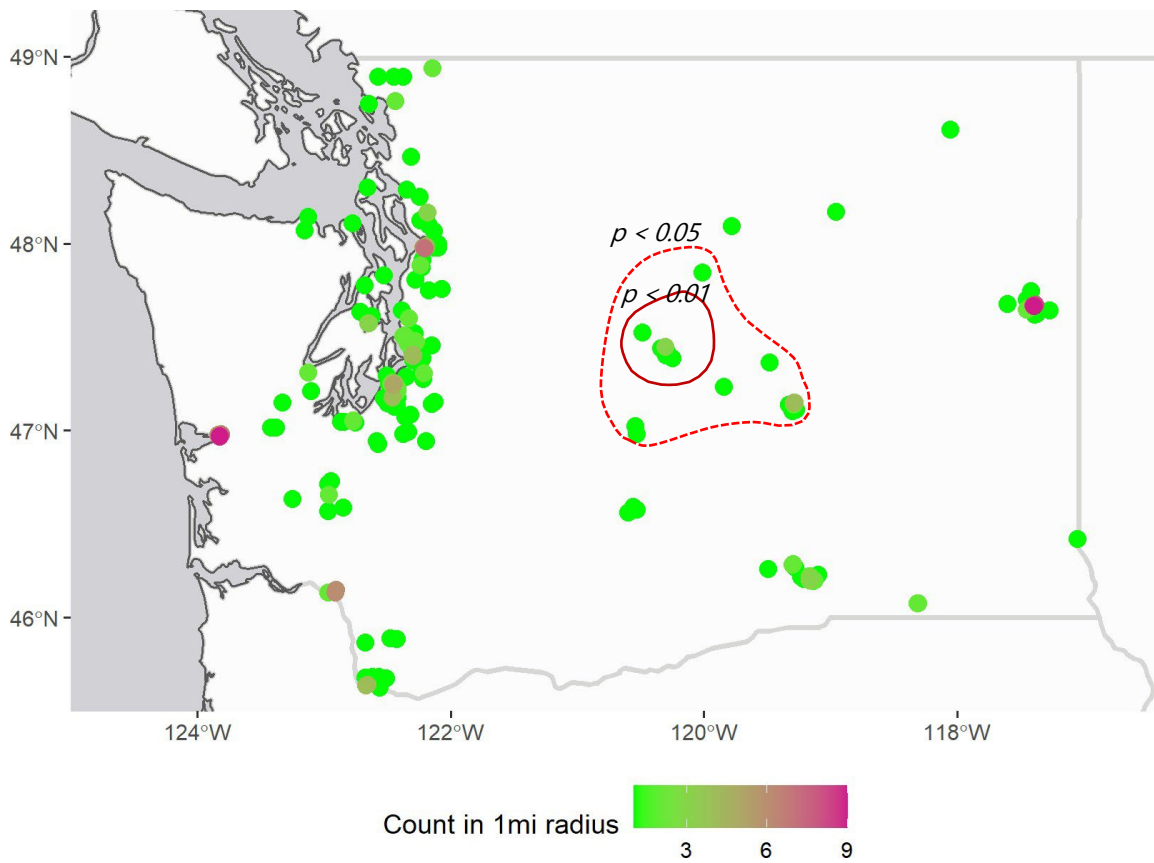
As of September 18, 2021:

- 165 (39.1%) of those released by emergency commutation have since been readmitted to a DOC facility following a violation (such as drug use, GPS violations, having unauthorized visitors in the approved residence or failure to report/contact the community corrections officer when directed). Most of these will return to the community after their custody violation hearings
- 39 (9.2%) violated but remained in the community with a stipulated agreement
- 72 (17.1%) have an active warrant
- None are currently jailed pending adjudication on a new felony charge

Individuals returning to a facility, on active warrant status, or otherwise sanctioned after commutation ($n = 222$; 52.6%) are shown in Figure 2.³ There is indication of elevated risk of violating or absconding among individuals released in the central region of the state.

³ Categories are not mutually exclusive. For instance, individuals may return to a facility as a violator and then be placed on active warrant status after absconding upon release back to the community.

Figure 2. Individuals violating or on active warrant status following emergency commutation as of September 18, 2021 (n = 222).



NOTE: *p* values are derived from test of density of individuals with new offense, violation or warrant in a subregion being greater than the overall density of released individuals in that region.

Rapid Reentry:

Between April 20 and May 15, 2020, 528 individuals were transferred to RRE to complete their sentence under electronic monitoring and supervision in the community. The distribution of their transfer locations is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Individuals transferred to Rapid Reentry (n = 528)

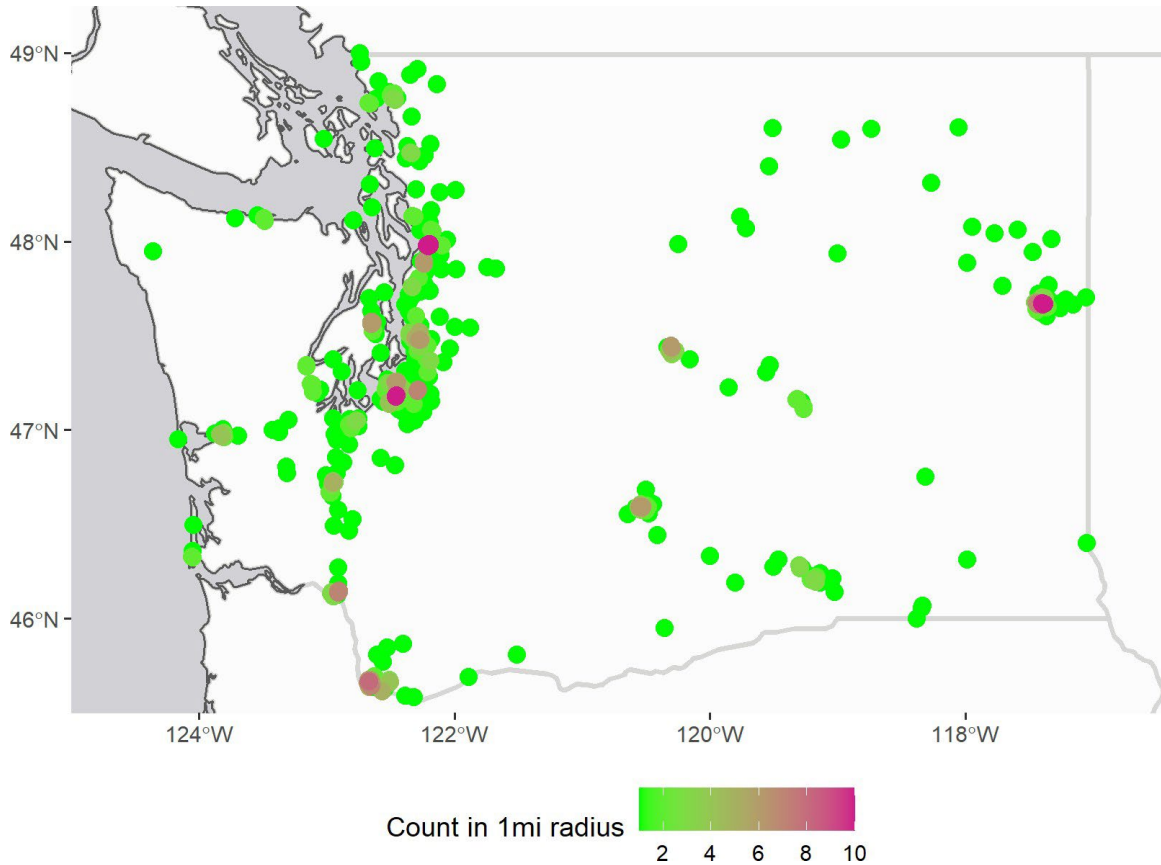


Table 2. Individuals transferred to Rapid Reentry by city of transfer location.

City	Individuals	Percent of RRE Transfers	Percent of WA Population
Spokane	53	10.1%	2.9%
Tacoma	45	8.5%	2.8%
Vancouver	35	6.6%	2.5%
Everett	27	5.1%	1.5%
Seattle	22	4.2%	9.9%
Yakima	21	4.0%	1.3%
Puyallup	13	2.5%	0.6%
Bellingham	12	2.3%	1.2%
Aberdeen	11	2.1%	0.2%

City	Individuals	Percent of RRE Transfers	Percent of WA Population
Kennewick	11	2.1%	1.1%

NOTE: The table includes cities with 10 or more individuals transferred to Rapid Reentry. City share of statewide population reflects most recent estimates available from Washington State Office of Financial Management.

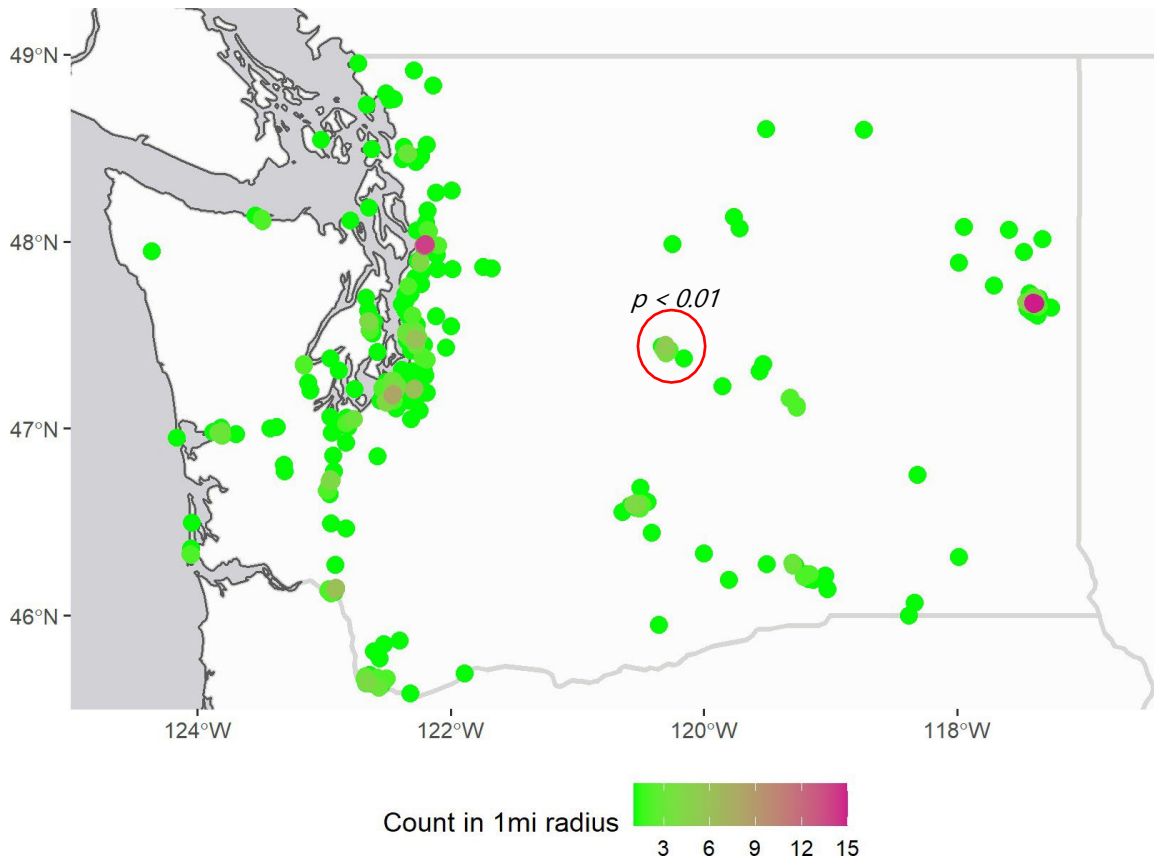
New offenses, violations and warrants:

As of September 18, 2021:

- 290 (54.9%) of transfers to RRE have since been readmitted after infracting or committing violations (such as drug use, GPS violations, having unauthorized visitors in the approved residence or failure to report/contact the community corrections officer when directed). Most of these will return to the community after their custody violation hearings.
- 65 (12.3%) remained in place following an infraction or stipulated agreement
- 100 (18.9%) have active warrants
- None are jailed with a new felony charge.

Individuals infracting, on warrant or jailed after transferring to RRE ($n = 376$; 71.2%) are shown in Figure 4. There is indication of elevated risk of infracting or violating among those transferred to the central region of the state.

Figure 4. Individuals infracting, on warrant or jailed after transferring to Rapid Reentry as of September 18, 2021 (n = 376).

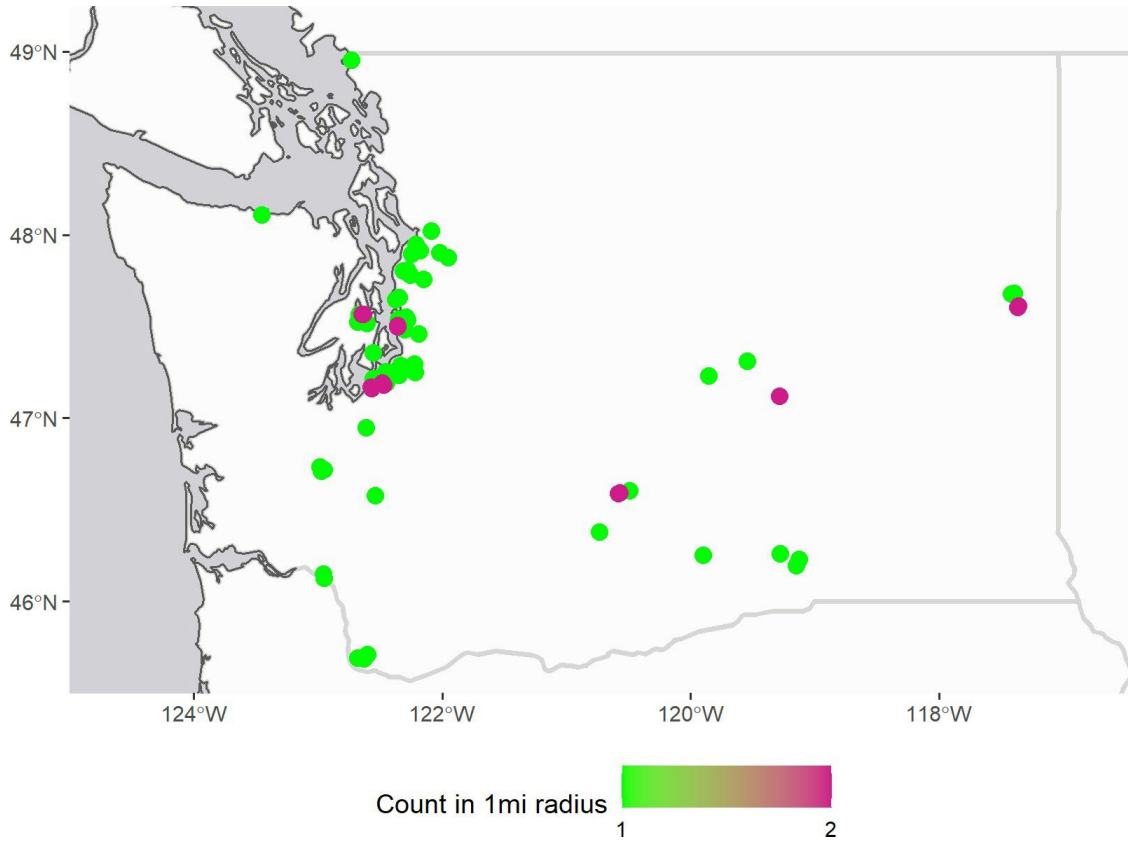


NOTE: *p* values are derived from test of density of individuals with new offense, violation or warrant in a subregion being greater than the overall density of released individuals in that region.

Furlough:

Between April 17 and May 7, 2020, 66 individuals were furloughed to locations shown in Figure 5. Most individuals on furlough were released to King and Pierce counties ($n = 14$ and $n = 10$, respectively).

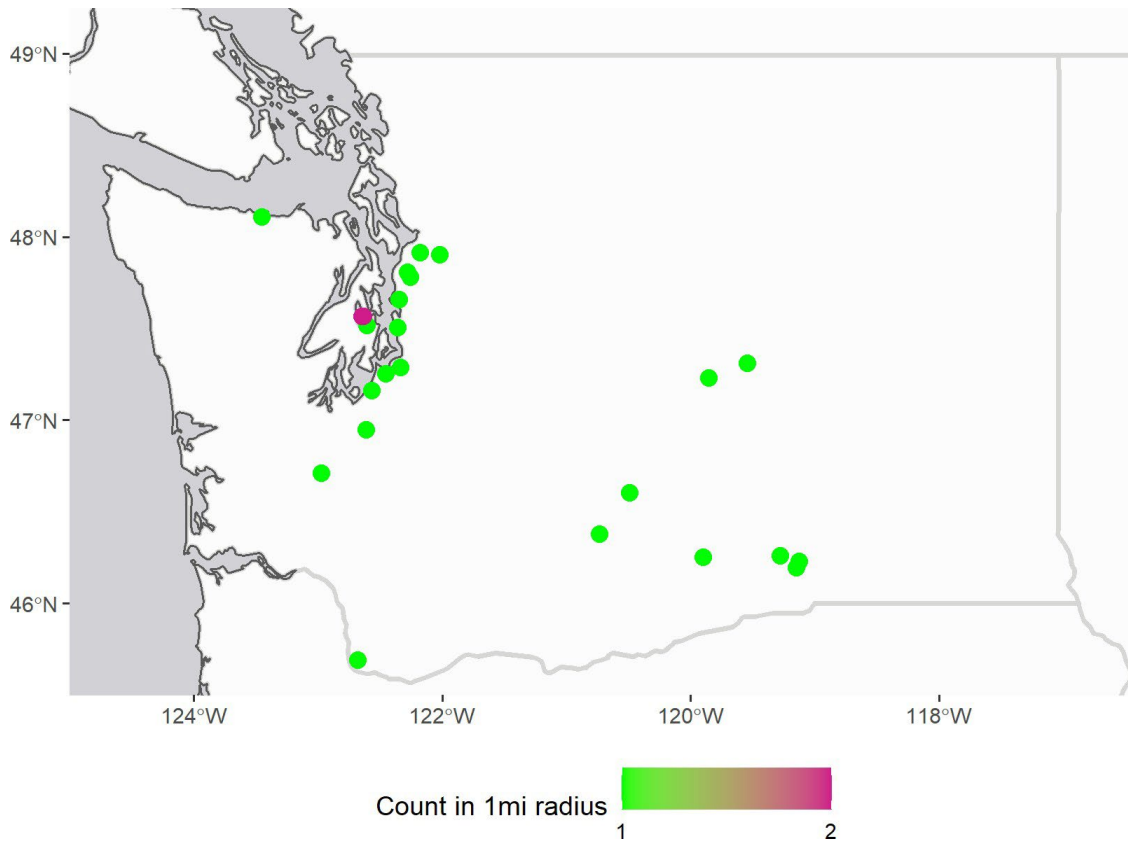
Figure 5. Furloughed individuals (n = 66).



New offenses, violations and warrants:

As of September 18, 2021, 15 furloughed individuals have since returned to a DOC facility following a violation; five violated and were sanctioned with stipulated agreements after continuing on to community supervision; 5 have active warrants (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Individuals on active warrant status or charged with a violation after furlough as of September 18, 2021 (n = 24).



Summary

As of September 18, 2021:

- Between April 17 and May 15, 2020, 422 individuals were released on emergency commutation, 528 transferred to RRE, and 66 were furloughed (1,016 in total)
- 165 (39.1%) released by emergency commutation, 290 (54.9%) transferred to RRE, and 15 furloughed individuals have returned to a DOC facility after violating release conditions (such as drug use, GPS violations, having unauthorized visitors in the approved residence or failure to report/contact the community corrections officer when directed). Most of these will return to the community after their custody violation hearings.
- 72 (17.1%) released by emergency commutation, 100 (18.9%) transferred to Rapid Reentry, and 5 furloughed individuals have active warrants
- No individuals released on emergency commutation or transferred to RRE are currently jailed with a new felony charge
- There is an indication of elevated risk of violating among those with commuted sentences and RRE transfers in the central region of the state.