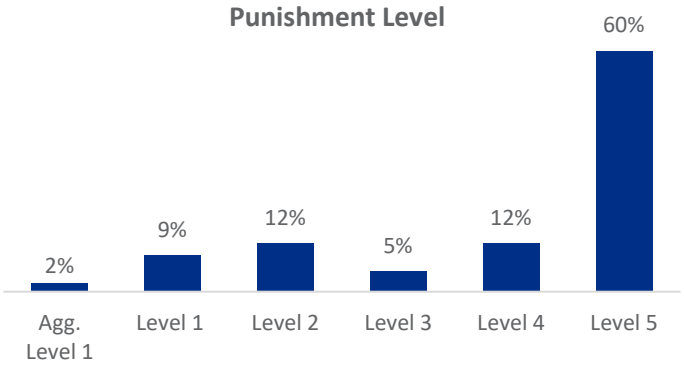
NORTH CAROLINA
SENTENCING AND POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION

QUICK FACTS: DWI CONVICTIONS

SEPTEMBER 2026

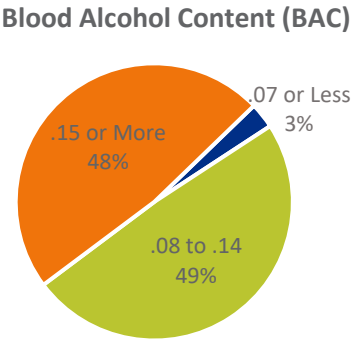
FISCAL YEAR 2025

⇒ There were 23,407 convictions for Driving While Impaired (DWI) offenses in FY 2025.
⇒ The majority of DWI convictions were in Level 5 (60%).
⇒ Most DWI offenders received probation (93%).



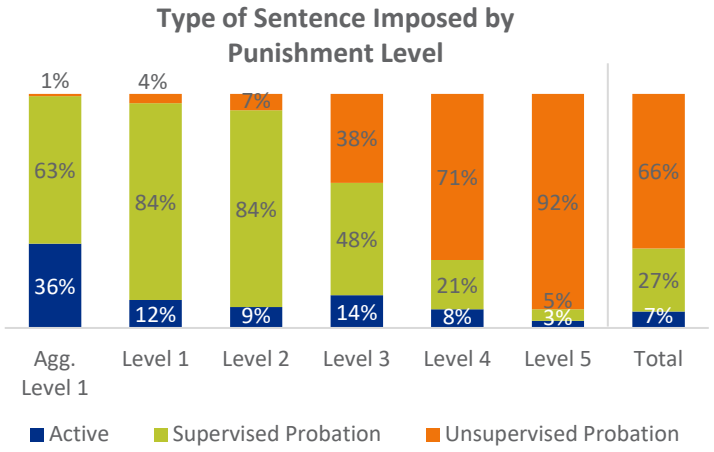
Offender Characteristics

- Nearly three-fourths of DWI offenders were male (74%).
- Almost half (48%) of offenders were White, 29% were Black, 16% were Hispanic, and 7% were Other.
- The average age at offense was 37 years old.
- Of convictions with a BAC recorded (75%), the .08 to .14 category comprised 49%, and the .15 or More category comprised 48% of convictions.

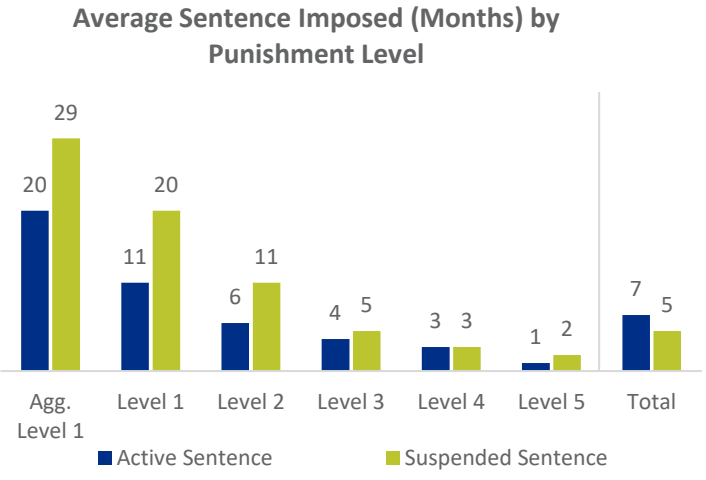


Punishment

- 7% of DWI convictions resulted in an active sentence, 27% resulted in supervised probation, and 66% resulted in unsupervised probation.
- Aggravated Level 1 had the highest percentage with active sentences (36%); Level 5 had the highest percentage with unsupervised probation (92%).
- Level 3 had a higher percentage of active sentences than Level 2 (14% compared to 9%), possibly due to DWI sentencing factors.



- On average, Aggravated Level 1 offenders had the longest active sentences (20 months).
- Among convictions in Level 1 through Level 5, the average active sentence length was generally half of the statutory maximum.



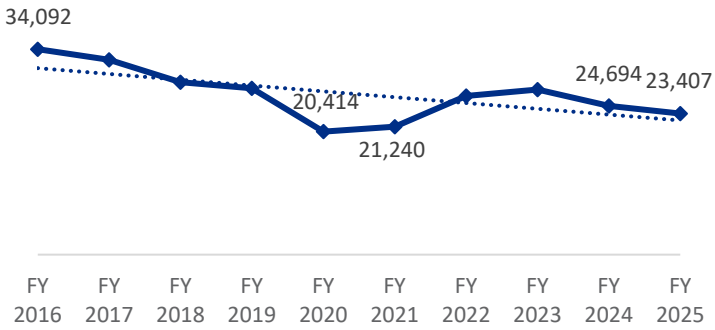
- Probation was imposed for all 21,647 DWI convictions with a suspended sentence; over two-thirds (71%) received unsupervised probation.
- The average probation term was 18 months for supervised and 13 months for unsupervised probation.
- Special probation was ordered for 24% of offenders with probation; the average period of confinement was 23 days. Nearly all Aggravated Level 1 suspended sentences (95%) included special probation.
- Fines were imposed for 79% of offenders with probation, with an average fine of $195. The most frequently imposed fine was $100.

Quick Facts: DWI Convictions

Fiscal Year 2016 – Fiscal Year 2025

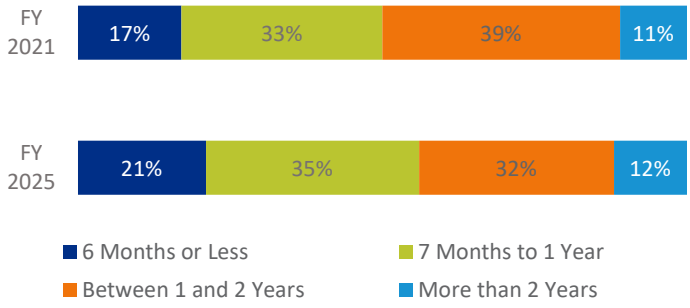
Overall, DWI convictions have decreased 31% since FY 2016; the sharpest decline occurred with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 (26% from FY 2019 to FY 2020). DWI convictions decreased 5% from FY 2024 to FY 2025. The distribution of DWI convictions by punishment level has remained stable since FY 2020. Over half of convictions were for Level 5 offenses, ranging from 56% to 60% per year.

DWI Convictions



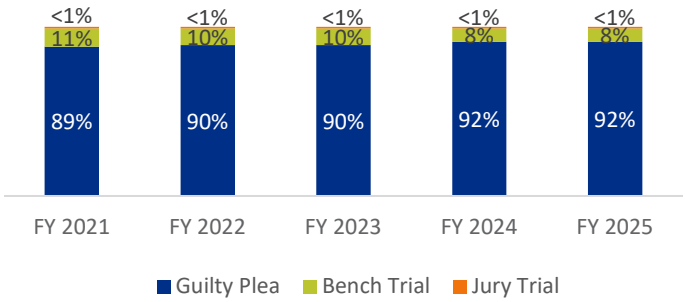
A higher percentage of DWI convictions were sentenced in 1 year or less (56% in FY 2025 compared to 50% in FY 2021), while the percentage sentenced between 1 and 2 years has decreased. In both years, median time to sentencing decreased as the punishment level decreased, with the median for Aggravated Level 1 convictions being about 3 months longer than Level 5 convictions.

Time to Sentencing



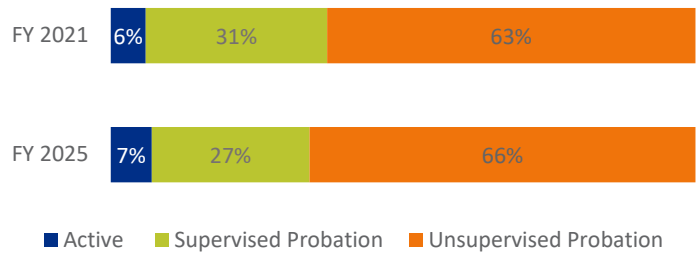
The percentage of convictions resulting from guilty pleas has been relatively stable since FY 2021 (from 89% to 92%). Jury trials occurred in less than 1% of convictions.

Method of Disposition



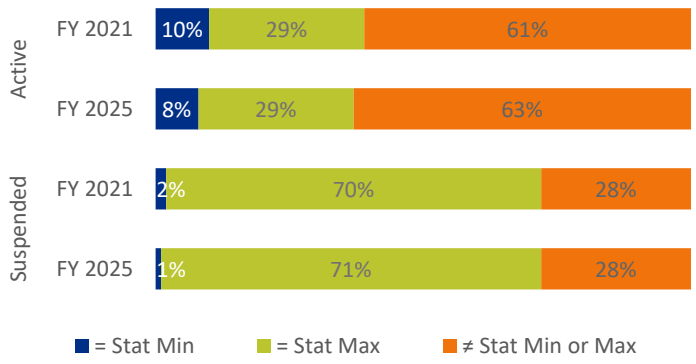
While active punishment sentences for DWI convictions remained stable, supervised probation decreased in FY 2025 (27%) compared to FY 2021 (31%).

Type of Punishment



Relative to the statutory minimum and maximums, sentences imposed were similar in FY 2021 and FY 2025; most suspended sentence lengths were equal to the statutory maximum.

Sentence Length Relative to the Statutory Minimum and Maximum Sentences



SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, FY 2016 – FY 2025 DWI Statistical Report Data

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The Honorable Charlie Brown, Chairman
Michelle Hall, Executive Director

For the NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission's *DWI Statistical Report* and all other publications, see the Commission's website: www.NCSPAC.org.