NORTH CAROLINA
SENTENCING AND POLICY ADVISORY
COMMISSION

QUICK FACTS:
MISDEMEANOR CONVICTIONS
JUNE 2025

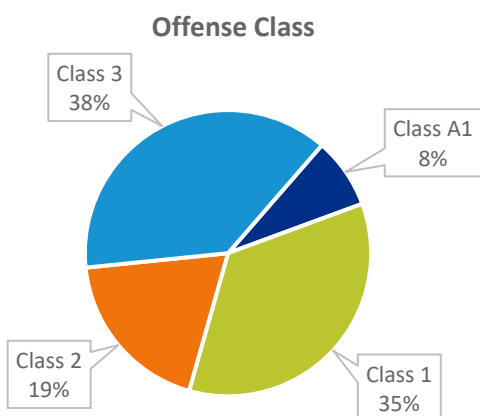## FISCAL YEAR 2024

⇒ There were 99,088 sentences imposed in FY 2024 for misdemeanor convictions under Structured Sentencing.

⇒ The largest percentage of misdemeanor convictions were for Class 3 offenses (38%), followed closely by Class 1 offenses (35%).

⇒ Most misdemeanor convictions were for a traffic offense (43%), while the fewest were for a person offense (8%).

⇒ The most frequently convicted offense was driving while license revoked (non-DWI).

⇒ The top five offenses accounted for 42% of all misdemeanor convictions.
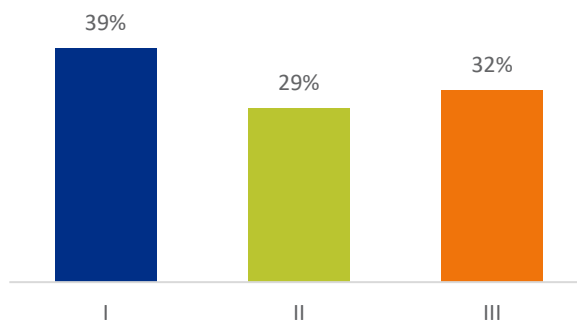
⇒ 29% of convictions resulted in an Active punishment.

Prior Conviction Level

Offense Class

Crime Type	N	%
Person	7,341	8
Property	14,728	17
Drug	12,404	14
Public Order	15,909	18
Traffic	37,969	43

Offender Characteristics

▪ The majority of misdemeanor offenders were male (73%).

▪ 46% of offenders were White, 41% were Black, 7% were Hispanic, 1% were Native American, and 5% were Other.

▪ Overall, the average age at conviction was 36; the highest percentage of offenders were between 21-30 years of age (31%), followed closely by offenders 31-40 years of age (30%).

▪ 39% of convictions were for offenders in Prior Conviction Level I (i.e., offenders with no prior convictions).
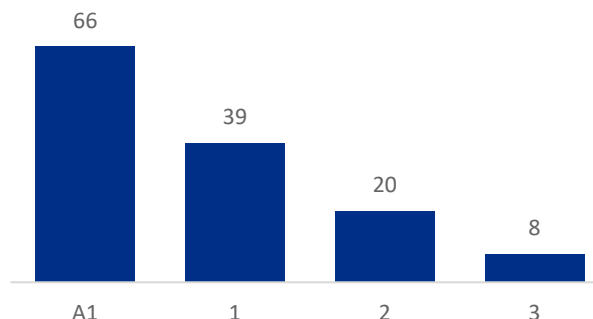
Top 5 Convictions	Class	N
Driving While License Revoked	3	13,687
Larceny of Property (≤$1,000)	1	7,922
Possess Drug Paraphernalia	1	6,825
Speeding	3	4,672
Reckless Driving to Endanger	2	4,033

Punishment Imposed

▪ 29% of misdemeanor convictions resulted in an Active punishment, 3% resulted in an Intermediate punishment, and 68% resulted in a Community punishment.

▪ Convictions for Class A1 and Class 1 misdemeanors accounted for the highest percentages of active sentences imposed relative to other offense classes (39% each).

▪ The average active sentence length was 32 days.

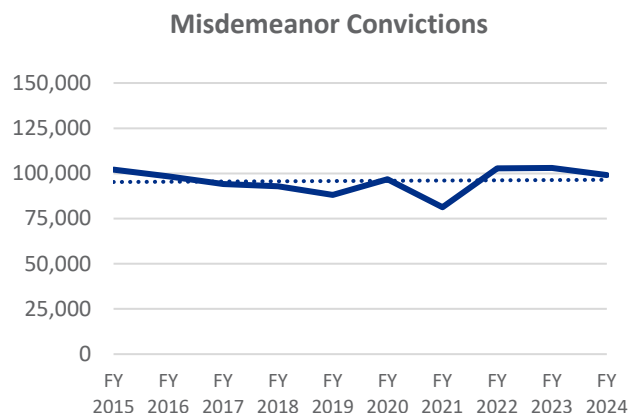▪ 76% of offenders with active sentences received credit for time served.

Average Active Sentence by Offense Class (Days)
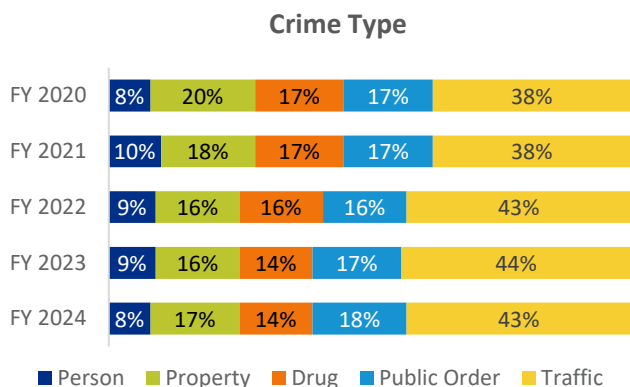
Quick Facts: Misdemeanor Convictions

Fiscal Year 2015 – Fiscal Year 2024

The increase in misdemeanor convictions in FY 2020 resulted from a methodological change to include Class 2 and Class 3 traffic offenses. Following declines due to the COVID-19 pandemic, misdemeanor convictions have increased 22% since FY 2021; however, misdemeanor convictions decreased 4% from FY 2023 to FY 2024.
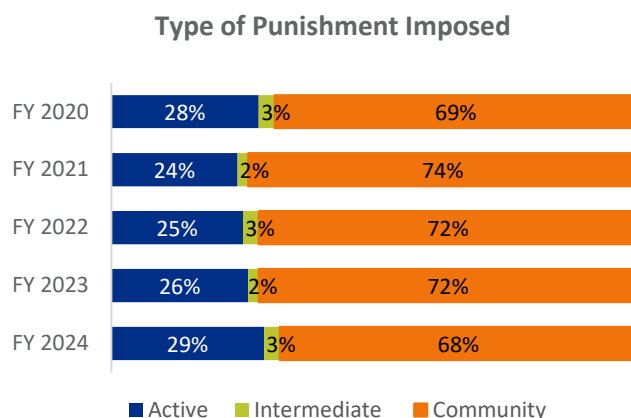
Misdemeanor Convictions

Note: Misdemeanor convictions in FY 2015 – FY 2019 exclude Class 2 and 3 traffic offenses, while FY 2020 - FY 2024 misdemeanor convictions include Class 2 and Class 3 traffic offenses.
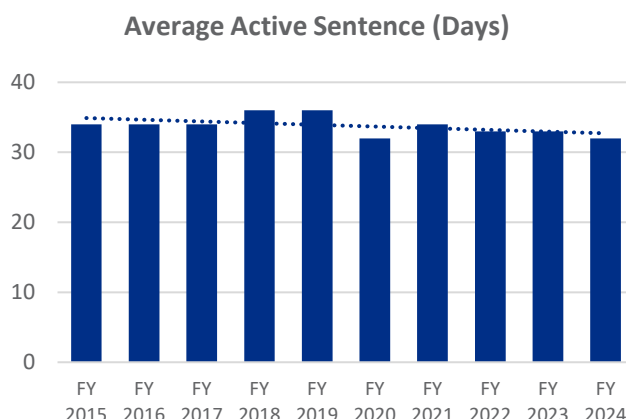
The composition of misdemeanor convictions by crime type has remained relatively consistent since FY 2020. Traffic offenses continue to account for the highest percentage of misdemeanor convictions, ranging from 38% to 44%.

Crime Type

	Person	Property	Drug	Public Order	Traffic
FY 2020	8%	20%	17%	17%	38%
FY 2021	10%	18%	17%	17%	38%
FY 2022	9%	16%	16%	16%	43%
FY 2023	9%	16%	14%	17%	44%
FY 2024	8%	17%	14%	18%	43%

While there were some fluctuations in the years following the pandemic, the distribution of misdemeanor convictions by type of punishment was very similar in FY 2020 and FY 2024.

Type of Punishment Imposed

	Active	Intermediate	Community
FY 2020	28%	3%	69%
FY 2021	24%	2%	74%
FY 2022	25%	3%	72%
FY 2023	26%	2%	72%
FY 2024	29%	3%	68%

The average active sentence imposed for all misdemeanor convictions has been remarkably stable over the past ten years, ranging from a low of 32 days to a high of 36 days. The average active sentence imposed was 32 days in FY 2024.

Average Active Sentence (Days)

In each year since FY 2020, nearly three-fourths of active sentences equaled the amount of credit for time served (with an average of 21 days in FY 2024), potentially indicating a sentence to time served.

Note: Figures in this publication generally exclude misdemeanor convictions that did not fit within the appropriate cell in the Misdemeanor Punishment Chart. With the implementation of Enterprise Justice, a substantial number of misdemeanor convictions are missing key sentencing information and are excluded from analysis. The effects of this missing information will continue to be monitored to determine what changes in trends may be a result of missing data versus actual changes in court practices.

SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, FY 2015 – FY 2024 Statistical Report Data