

# Jails

On any given day, 731,000 people sit in America's more than 3,200 jails, all administered on the local (county or municipal) level.<sup>260</sup> Almost 13 million people cycle through the nation's jails annually<sup>261</sup>.

The short duration of people's stays contributes to the higher level of violence in jails than in prisons. Jails are "volatile" places, because their detainees haven't had a chance to get accustomed to a routine. Many have just experienced trauma or violence, are detoxing or cut off from needed medications, or are driven crazy by boredom—jails tend to

offer few diversions or activities. In 2012, the suicide rate in jails was 40 per 100,000 people, more than three times the national rate of 12.6.<sup>262</sup>

<sup>260</sup> <http://theweek.com/articles/540725/how-local-jail-became-hell-investigation>

<sup>261</sup> <http://www.nij.gov/journals/270/pages/criminal-records.aspx>

<sup>262</sup> <http://theweek.com/articles/540725/how-local-jail-became-hell-investigation>

<sup>263</sup> <http://www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/incarcerations-front-door-report.pdf>

<sup>264</sup> <http://theweek.com/articles/540725/how-local-jail-became-hell-investigation>

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## Facts and Figures

### Who ends up in jails?

- Seventy-five percent of people in jail are detained for

nonviolent misdemeanors, such as small-scale drug possession, petty theft, or minor property damage.<sup>263</sup>

- Sixty-two percent of them have not yet been proven guilty.<sup>264</sup>

- Some 34% are held simply because they cannot afford to pay bail (for more on bail, see p. 35).<sup>265</sup>

### Rabbi Hayyim David Halevy: The Arrest of Suspects According to *Halakhah*, and How to Avoid Arresting Those Innocent of Any Crime

**One who makes an arrest is dealing with a person who, according to the law, is still innocent—this is before the person has stood in judgment, and before his guilt has been proven. For this reason, the arrest is a violation of the freedom of a person, who is presumed innocent. But in order to allow for the interrogation of the suspect, and for bringing him to court, we have to permit his arrest. But there are boundaries on this allowance, both in regard to the nature of the arrest, and in regard to the amount of time that a person may be held without trial. And above all, the obligation to release the person until trial. All of this comes from the fundamental right of human freedom, and the prohibition against detaining him and taking away his freedom. . .**

**- *Aseh L'kha Rav* 3:48. Rabbi Halevy lived from 1924-1998 and served as Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Tel Aviv from 1973 until his death.**

**Why New York City Pre-Trial Detainees Are in Jail (2013 Data)**<sup>266</sup>

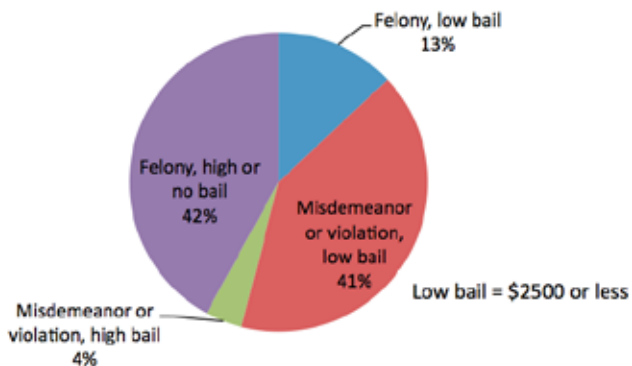
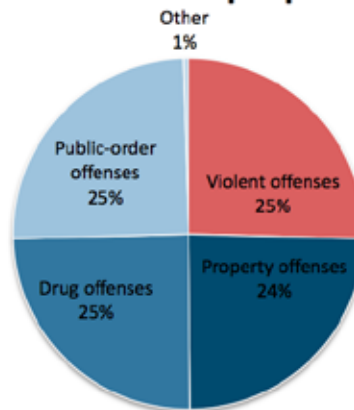


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**Most serious offense of people in jail, 2002**<sup>267</sup>



266 <http://www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/incarcerations-front-door-report.pdf>  
 267 <http://www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/incarcerations-front-door-report.pdf>