



# ***RPI FAQs Bulletin***

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This Federal Judicial Center publication was undertaken in furtherance of the Center's statutory mission to conduct and stimulate research and development for the improvement of judicial administration. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Federal Judicial Center.



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# Introduction

Risk Prediction Index (RPI) training and implementation packages were sent to every district in May 1997. During the summer of 1997, districts completed RPI training and, by September 1, 1997, began using the RPI as the initial risk assessment tool for all new active supervision cases. During this start-up period several probation officers contacted us -- or made comments on their training evaluation sheets -- requesting additional information regarding the development of the index, asking for clarification of an item, or asking how a particular situation should be scored. In addition, some officers had technical questions regarding use of the RPI application or problems with printing.

Representatives of the RPI Implementation team responded to the individual district RPI Coordinators with answers, or suggested solutions or work arounds to technical problems. We realized that although the needs of the individual districts were addressed that way, other districts that might benefit from the same information wouldn't necessarily know about the problem or the solution, or about the additional work that is being done on the RPI application.

This bulletin, therefore, serves several purposes:

- It reports on new developments with the RPI.
- It provides information regarding the relationship between the RPI and PACTS.
- It provides additional information about the development of the RPI model and its expected use by probation officers.
- It discusses some technical problems that have been encountered in the initial release of the application and suggests possible solutions.
- It provides answers to some of the more notable questions that were asked regarding the use of the RPI and the interpretation of model items. Not all of the items included in these sections were truly "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQs); some questions and comments are included because they illustrate situations or concerns that may be similar to those experienced by many officers and allowed us to provide additional guidance in those areas.

# New Developments

In this section we highlight information and changes that are particularly important to all officers who use the RPI. Many of the items mentioned here, however, were prompted by questions or comments that were sent to us during the implementation period. In those instances, the question and a more detailed response is included in the “Frequently Asked Questions” section under the appropriate topic. Officers may want to refer to those sections for a more complete explanation.

## Contacting the FJC RPI Coordinator

District RPI Coordinators can contact FJC staff for assistance by calling 202-273-4070 ext. 424 or by sending ccMail to “FJC RPI Coordinator” at “AOHubPO”.

## New RPI Web Page on the J-Net

The Center has developed an RPI web page that can be accessed via the Federal Judicial Center's home page on the J-Net (<http://156.132.47.230>). The page includes information about the RPI implementation as well as downloadable copies of RPI materials.

## New Version of the RPI Application

A modified version of the RPI application (RPIAPP 1.1) is being developed and is expected to be available for distribution in September 1998. The new version can be downloaded from the FJC RPI web page on the J-Net or an RPI Coordinator can request an upgrade from the FJC RPI Coordinator via ccMail.

RPIAPP 1.1 includes:

### New features

- Clarifications were added to item definitions based on the questions and answers included in this *RPI FAQs Bulletin*.
- A text version of the Calculation Worksheet report was added (see Attachment 1).
- An option was added to the Settings and Preferences screen that allows the user to select whether graphic or text Calculation Worksheet reports should be printed (see Attachment 2).
- New “Import Records” and “Export Records” functions have been implemented and are accessible from the Settings and Preferences screen. The “Import Records” function will allow the user to bring RPI offender records that were saved in one copy of the RPI data file into a newer version of the application (i.e., transfer the data from the old application when you upgrade to the new version). The “Export Records” function will write out a tab-delimited file containing the offender records so that the information can

be transferred to another application such as a spreadsheet or database (see Attachment 2).

#### Modifications

- A change was made in the way that the “Date Calculated” dates were generated. In the original version they always changed from the actual date calculated to the current date whenever a record was viewed or printed. In the new version the actual date the score was originally calculated is retained.
- A correction was made to the way the Help screens preferences setting worked. In the original version, if the Help Screen preference on the Settings and Preferences screen was set to “No” the automatic Help screens were suppressed (as expected) but it also blocked access to the Help screens on demand when the “Help” button was clicked. In the new version, Help screens are always available on demand by clicking on the “Help” button, regardless of the Preferences setting (this is how the function is documented to work).
- Corrected the RPI score that is displayed on the Calculation Worksheet for Case Study #2. In the original version, an RPI score of 2 is always displayed; in the new version the correct RPI score is displayed. (Note: The RPI score displayed on the Case Study #2 Evaluation screen has always been correct. The incorrect score was only displayed on the Worksheet screen and would not have been seen by the user in normal operation since the Evaluation screen automatically appears after the calculation. A user would have had to return to the Calculation Worksheet for Case Study #2 explicitly from the Evaluation screen to have seen the incorrect score.)

### **Investigating Multi-User Network Version of Application**

In response to requests from a few districts, we are investigating the feasibility of producing a version of the RPI application that is configured to allow concurrent access by multiple users over a local area network. For a district to be able to use such a multi-user version of the application, however, configuration changes would probably need to be made on the target network servers. We will keep RPI Coordinators apprised of the status of our investigation.

### **RPI and PACTS**

The PACTS software was modified to accept RPI scores. The new version (6.0), was distributed to all districts in July and August 1997. Previous versions of PACTS did not support the RPI, so districts were required to upgrade to PACTS 6.0 to record RPI scores. In response to questions regarding use of the RPI and entering the RPI score into PACTS, the Federal Corrections and Supervision Division sent a memorandum to all Chief Probation Officers in September 1997 (see Attachment 3).

Patches to PACTS 6.0 (EMRs 6.0.1 and 6.0.2) were released in September and October 1997. These patches corrected problems related to:

- flow control during data entry to require an RPI score in appropriate cases (i.e., all new active supervision cases), and not to require it when it is not appropriate (e.g., cases starting in inactive status)
- the handling of other supervision status changes (specifically cases received in inactive status prior to the RPI implementation date that are converted to active cases after the implementation date)
- errors in FPSIS extractions
- allowing both the RPI and Salient Factor scores to be entered for some cases

For more information regarding the RPI-relevant modifications to PACTS contact TTSD's PACTS User Support.

The RPI Calculation Worksheet provided in the *Risk Prediction Index Training and Calculation Worksheet* application program is an interim calculation method. It is expected that the RPI calculation will be incorporated directly into PACTS 2000 when it becomes available.

## Clarifications to Item Definitions

### Date Supervision Started

- The date the offender started a period of *active* supervision in the *district*.
- For offenders in alternative living arrangements (e.g. halfway houses, community correction centers, other institutions) the date that active supervision starts (as opposed to supervision in an "inactive" or "Bureau of Prisons" status) should be used regardless of the type of alternative living arrangement or the offender's level of access to the community.

### How many times was the offender arrested prior to the instant offense (0-15)?

- Use the date of the arrest rather than the date the offense activity occurred to determine whether an arrest is "prior" to the instant offense.
- Count all actual arrests, even for minor offenses (such as repeated occurrences of driving without a license, or failure to pay parking tickets) that in other circumstances might have resulted in a fine rather than an arrest.

### Has the offender ever absconded from a previous period of supervision?

- Whether running away from a halfway house or other mandated alternative living arrangement is considered an escape (which is not counted) or absconding (which is counted) depends on whether the offender was on an active period of probation, parole or supervised release (federal, state, or local) at the time. If the offender was under the authority of the incarcerating entity and *not on active supervision* then it would be escape and not absconding even if the offender was living in a halfway house with access to the community.

# Questions and Comments

## Development and Components of the RPI Model

In 1991 the Committee on Criminal Law of the Judicial Conference asked the Federal Judicial Center to develop a new risk assessment tool for the federal probation system. The request was prompted by the concern that the risk assessment tools in use at that time (i.e., Risk Prediction Scale 80 (RPS80) and the Salient Factor Score (SFS) ) were losing predictive accuracy. They had been developed over a decade earlier and did not account for the changing nature of the federal offender population and changes in federal sentencing law.

The Risk Prediction Index (RPI) was developed in response to that request. Elements of the RPI are specifically aimed at addressing these “accuracy over time” concerns and keeping the model up-to-date. For example, the RPI uses information regarding the offender’s status at the start of supervision (e.g., employment and living arrangements) rather than at the time of the instant offense making it a more consistent indicator for all offenders; it is unaffected by the time lag between the instant offense and the start of supervision which can vary substantially from offender to offender, especially when comparing probationers to parolees. In addition, the RPI model uses a general drug category, which allows the model to stay more up-to-date rather than focusing on a particular kind of drug use that might have been prevalent at the time the model was created (e.g., the RPS80 and SFS only take into account opiate or heroin usage and not other drugs).

During the research and development of the RPI, information was collected and analyzed for almost a hundred data items for over 2,600 offenders. Several steps were involved in the development of the model including evaluating the strength of the relationship of individual items to recidivism, which is broadly defined as any rearrest or revocation of supervision. Items that had a sufficiently strong relationship to recidivism were then used in a logistic regression analysis designed to identify the model equation that provided optimum predictive ability, while balancing ease-of-use and accuracy-over-time issues. The predictive ability of the RPI model was compared to the predictive ability of the RPS80 and SFS for offenders in our construction sample. In these comparisons (using the original construction sample and 10 randomly generated variations of the construction sample) the RPI correlation coefficients were consistently higher and less variable (average .38 spread .06) than the RPS80 (average .30 spread .14) or SFS (average .30 spread .08) correlations. Similar patterns were seen when comparisons among the three models were made for offenders of different types of supervision (e.g., for parole only or probation only groups).

The model was also field tested in 11 districts and scores were calculated for a verification sample of 278 offenders who had terminated supervision in 1995. The distribution of scores for the verification sample was consistent with the distribution seen in the construction sample; the recidivism patterns by RPI score

were consistent with the expected patterns; and, the correlation coefficient for the verification sample (.54) was higher than those achieved in the construction sample.

The Center plans to monitor use of the RPI in the federal system and to re-validate it periodically against newer cohorts of offenders in order to assess any change in the model's predictive ability. In addition, we will continue to review questions from probation officers about the scoring or application of the RPI in order to identify any adjustments that need to be made or any additional guidance that needs to be disseminated.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** Some officers are confused about how the RPI score is calculated. Does the program application assign a score of "0" to "No" responses and a score of "1" to "Yes" responses?

**A:** No. The RPI is based on a logistic regression model. Each index item is assigned its own mathematically derived weight. These weights are summed into a "preliminary" score if the item response is one that is more likely to be associated with recidivism than the opposite response.

On the worksheet the wording of the questions was selected for clarity and not to insure that "Yes" responses were always positive indicators and "No" responses always negative. For example, for the item "Was a weapon used in the commission of the instant offense?", a "Yes" response causes the item's weight to be included in the preliminary score, because offenders in our sample who used weapons tended to recidivate more than those who didn't. However, for the item "Does the offender have a college degree?", a "No" response causes the item's weight to be included in the preliminary score, because offenders who did not have college degrees tended to recidivate more than those who did.

A mathematical function is then used to transform the preliminary score into the final RPI score. The reader can review the hand-calculation worksheet (Attachment 4) to get an idea of the weights assigned to the index items and whether a "Yes" or "No" response causes points to be added to the preliminary score.

**Q:** There were many questions that asked why a certain item was not included in the model. For example:

- Why weren't certain factors such as criminal associations and gambling included as index variables? These variables seem to be highly predictive of recidivistic behavior.
- Why isn't the type of instant offense taken into consideration; I have an offender who committed multiple murders but still received an RPI Score of 1?
- Why isn't behavior in prison included in the model?
- Why doesn't the model take into account special situations, such as, offenders with financial or mental health problems, sex offenders, or offenders who are returning to the "old stomping grounds?"
- Why isn't mental illness, or violence and use of weapons in prior offenses included?
- Why doesn't the model give greater attention to white-collar offenders?

**A:** Many variables were considered during the development of the model including most of the ones listed in the questions above. The identification of variables to include went through 4 progressive stages. First, the information on the variable had to be readily known from standard information sources at the start of supervision. Second, the variable had to pertain to a sufficiently large number of offenders (in our analysis we used a cutoff of 40 cases, or about 1.5% of our construction sample); variables that are only relevant to a few offenders are not useful in a model for the general offender population. Third, the variables had to distinguish sufficiently recidivists from non-recidivists. We accepted only variables that identified recidivism rates less than half as likely ( $< .5$ ), or one and a half times as likely ( $> 1.5$ ), to recidivate compared to the general population as determined by a logistic regression analysis. Finally, all the selected variables were included in a logistic regression analysis that tested and evaluated larger sets of variables before the final model was identified that produced the best predictive results balanced against ease-of-use considerations.

In a logistic regression model many factors that are individually highly related to the outcome (in our study, recidivism) are often highly related to each other. When evaluated in combination, an item that has the strongest relationship to the outcome will be included in the model but a second, highly related variable will not be included because the extra predictive power contributed by the second item isn't very significant once the influence of the first item is taken into consideration. For example, both prior arrests and prior felony convictions are predictive as individual items, but once prior arrests are included in the model, knowing whether there were prior felony convictions does not add significant predictive power to the model and it is excluded.

There is a similar situation with character identifiers such as “gang member”<sup>1</sup>. Once the overt behaviors that we are typically concerned about are taken into consideration in the model, the extra knowledge regarding an offender's actual affiliation with a gang does not add significant additional predictive power. For example, an offender who is an active member of a street gang who has several prior arrests, a history of drug usage, and does not have legitimate employment will receive a high RPI score because of the behaviors exhibited and not because of his or her “gang” status. Similarly, an offender who acknowledges a past gang affiliation, but who had no prior arrests, did not use drugs, was currently living in a stable environment, and was employed, might get a low RPI score. There is no indication that such an offender's risk of recidivism is greater than that indicated by the RPI score purely because of gang affiliation.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that we are describing a general concept regarding regression modeling using gang affiliation as an illustration. Due to an extremely low incidence of identified gang members in our analysis sample we were not able to directly evaluate the impact that a “gang member” variable would have had on the logistic regression.

## Interpretation and Use of the RPI Score

According to policy statements issued by the Federal Corrections and Supervision Division of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, an RPI score must be calculated for all offenders starting a period of active federal supervision on or after September 1, 1997 (extended from the original implementation date of July 1, 1997). Once the RPI is being scored for all new supervision cases, districts may discontinue use of the RPS80 and the Salient Factor Score as initial risk assessment tools.<sup>2</sup>

The RPI should be used only to inform the development of the initial case supervision plan regarding the likelihood of recidivism presented by this offender. It should not be recalculated later during the period of supervision (e.g., after a year) to make reclassification decisions (see transfer exception below). Information included in *RPI Profiles* can assist officers in making re-classification decisions. The RPI is not an appropriate tool for informing pretrial disposition decisions.

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** Should an RPI score be calculated for inactive supervision cases?

**A:** No, the RPI should not be calculated for offenders in an “inactive” or “unsupervised” status. If the offender’s status changes, the RPI should be calculated at the time a period of active supervision begins (see Attachment 3).

**Q:** Should an RPI be calculated for offenders who started a period of inactive supervision before September 1, 1997, but who are moved to active supervision after September 1, 1997? PACTS currently expects an RPS80 score rather than an RPI score based on the initial receive date.

**A:** Yes, an RPI score should be calculated for all offenders starting a period of active supervision after September 1, 1997. In version 6.0, PACTS was behaving according to specifications. However, a change in specifications was issued to allow the RPI to be based on the initially-inactive-to-active date 1997 (see Attachment 3). Districts using PACTS 6.0 who encountered this problem were instructed to calculate the RPI for supervision purposes, but in the somewhat rare cases that span the implementation date, were required to enter a valid RPS80 Score or "-" to pass the PACTS edits. PACTS EMRs (6.0.1 and 6.0.2) released in September and October 1997 corrected the operation of PACTS in these situations.

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<sup>2</sup> In accordance with the directives of the U.S. Parole Commission the Salient Factor Score must still be used to support requests for early termination of supervision for parolees; refer to the policy statement issued by the Federal Corrections and Supervision Division dated April 22, 1997.

**Q:** When should the RPI be calculated -- at the very beginning of supervision or when the Initial Case Supervision Plan is done (which may be up to 60 days after the start of supervision)?

**A:** The RPI should be calculated as close to the start of supervision as possible so that the officer can use the information that the score provides in developing the supervision plan. It may take a short period of time to do an updated NCIC check or to verify employment, for example, but that should not delay the calculation for too long. An accurate and valid RPI score must be entered into the supervision record at the time the record is entered into the PACTS system. If in an unusual circumstance there is a longer delay in computing the score, it is critical that the information regarding the offender's status **at the start of supervision** be used in doing the calculation. For example, if the RPI calculation is not done until 60 days after the start of supervision, the officer needs to make sure to record the fact that the offender was unemployed at the start of supervision and should not take into account the job that the offender got four weeks later.

**Q:** When should an RPI be calculated for offenders in CCC? They are often there longer than 60 days.

**A:** When the RPI should be calculated depends on the supervision status of the offender. If the offender's assignment to a halfway house or treatment center causes an initial supervision period to be in an "inactive" or "Bureau of Prison" status, then an RPI does not need to be computed. However, once supervision status is classified as "active," an RPI must be calculated regardless of whether the offender has been released from or is still residing in an interim facility. The responses to the employment and living arrangement items in the model must accurately reflect the offender's situation at the start of active supervision (e.g., an offender in a treatment center is not living with a spouse or children) and not the situation the officer expects to be true upon the offender's release from such a facility. (See Attachment 3)

**Note that this answer, which is based on supervision status, is a clarification and correction of the information provided in the RPI application, which uses "access to the street" as the deciding factor.**

**Q:** Who should calculate the RPI score, the supervising officer or the officer who handles the initial interview?

**A:** The RPI is designed to be completed by the officer supervising the offender. A few questions require knowledge of the offender's status (e.g., age, employment status or living arrangements) at the start of active supervision. If a district has an arrangement in which someone other than the

supervising officer handles the initial intake interview, however, those officers can score the RPI as long as they have the accurate, verified information needed to do the calculation and accurately use status information at the start of supervision.

**Q:** Should the author of the presentence report (PSR) calculate the RPI?

**A:** The RPI is designed to be completed by the officer supervising the offender. An RPI score calculated at the time the presentence report was written would not have the correct information for items that require knowledge of an offender's situation at the start of supervision. This may be a change in procedures for offices in which officers in the presentence unit had previously calculated the RPS80 and SFS.

If desired, **for advisory purposes only**, an RPI score can be calculated for inclusion in the PSR, but it should be calculated using the offender's status at the time the PSR is written. Such an advisory RPI score cannot be used when the offender starts supervision; a new RPI score must be calculated that takes into account the offender's status at the start of supervision (see Attachment 3).

**Q:** Should an RPI score be calculated for offenders who had no PSR?

**A:** An RPI score must be calculated for all offenders who begin a period of active supervision. If a PSR was not written for an offender starting active supervision the PO must obtain the information needed to score the RPI in some other manner. In most cases an NCIC check will provide prior arrest and absconding information. The other information can be obtained during the initial interview and verified as necessary.

**Q:** Should an RPI score be calculated for offenders who have been received by transfer?

**A:** If supervision is terminated in one district and transferred to another district, then the receiving district should calculate a new RPI score. Essentially the offender is starting a new period of active supervision in the new district and the RPI score can be a useful item of information for the new supervising officer. The date that supervision started in the receiving district is the "Date Supervision Started" for the RPI calculation. However, a new RPI should not be calculated for intradistrict transfers between offices or officers.

**Q:** Should an RPI score be calculated for offenders who have been deported? Since the individual is not physically present, there is no way to interview them to get start-of-supervision information.

**A:** An offender who is not physically present is most likely to be placed on inactive rather than active supervision. An RPI score is not required for offenders on inactive supervision. The unmodified version of PACTS 6.0 (that was released over the summer of 1997) will request an RPI score for inactive cases. However, the patched version that became available in October 1997 does not request an RPI score for inactive cases (see Attachment 3).

If for some reason an offender who is not physically present is being carried as active supervision rather than inactive, then an RPI score must be calculated. The best approach in this very unusual situation seems to be to answer “No” to the two start-of-supervision items -- employment and living arrangements -- since the true status cannot be verified. This approach will provide a conservative estimate of the true RPI score.

**Q:** There were various questions asking for more information regarding how to interpret the RPI. For example:

- How do we categorize defendants receiving scores between 4 and 7? For example, should an offender with a score of 4 be classified low, medium, or high risk?
- The application doesn't tell the officer what to do with the results of the RPI calculation. We need better information on interpreting scores.

**A:** RPI scores range from 0 to 9. Low scores are associated with low recidivism rates and high scores are associated with high recidivism rates. There is no required correspondence between a particular RPI score and a level of supervision, but the information the score provides should help an officer identify the appropriate level of risk control to use with an offender.

The RPI score represents a broad estimate of the percentage of offenders with a specific score who will recidivate. For example, in our offender sample, 41% of the offenders who received a score of 4 recidivated; in theory, we would expect that number to be between 35% and 44%. An approximately 40% recidivism rate is more than 1.5 times the average recidivism rate for all offenders (e.g., 22.8% for our sample). Although the RPI cannot predict for any particular offender whether he or she will recidivate, or predict the type of recidivistic behavior that might occur (e.g., violent behavior vs. failure to conform to conditions of supervision), knowing what the recidivism rates and patterns are for other similarly situated offenders, can help the officer determine what risk-control measures to include in the supervision plan. We recommend that officers review the descriptive information of offender groups provided in the *RPI Profiles* pamphlet that was distributed with the implementation materials in May.

**Q:** There were various questions regarding possible caseload management implications of the RPI. For example:

- How does the RPI affect credit for cases and our work formula?

- Will RPI scores be used to classify an offender as requiring a high, medium or low level of supervision? If so, will case loads then be distributed in the same manner ensuring that each PO has a diverse population of all levels of offenders?

- A:** The RPI score does not affect the workload credit given for supervision cases nor does it automatically dictate a particular level of supervision (see Attachment 3). An individual district, however, may adopt procedures for using the RPI score to assign offenders to officers or to balance caseloads.
- Q:** The RPI would be most useful if an officer didn't know the offender. I hope we know more about our clients than that.
- A:** The RPI is a tool. It provides an estimate of the risk of recidivism presented by an offender. This estimate is based on objective criteria that were demonstrated to have a strong relationship to recidivism and that are consistently applied to all offenders. Even in a situation where the officer has substantial knowledge of the offender, which is less likely at the very beginning of supervision, such an objective assessment should be a useful piece of information. If the RPI score is in alignment with the officer's assessment it gives it additional weight. If the RPI score is not what the officer expected, then it provides the officer with an opportunity to evaluate the reasons for the differences and perhaps in doing so get an even better understanding of the risk-control measures required in the case.

## Using the RPI Application

The RPI Calculation Worksheet included in the *Risk Prediction Index Training and Calculation Worksheet* application program uses the final, approved version of the RPI model. ***Versions of the model used during the field test are out of date and should not be used.***

The Center assumes that most districts will use the computerized Calculation Worksheet included in the new RPI application to calculate RPI scores until the computations are included in PACTS 2000. However, if a district is interested in using the optional hand calculation, or in incorporating the calculations into a district-specific information system, please contact the FJC RPI Coordinator for additional assistance.

### Frequently Asked Questions

- Q:** Why don't worksheets and screens printed from the application fit on a single page?
- A:** Pages need to be printed at 80% reduction to fit. This parameter has been set automatically for postscript printers, however, some printers or printer drivers may not be able to perform the required reduction. In those cases, changing the page orientation to "Landscape" instead of "Portrait" should allow the form to be printed correctly. Alternatively, the text version of the Calculation Worksheet available in the new version of the RPI application (RPIAPP 1.1) fits in standard portrait mode (see "New Developments," and Attachment 1).
- Q:** I'm having a problem printing from the Case Listing screen. Although all of my cases appear on the screen, when I ask for a printout I only get one case.
- A:** By default, the print settings in the application are set to print only the single currently active record ("Current record"). That option can be changed by the user so that all records currently selected ("Records being browsed") are printed instead. Unfortunately, that option is incorporated into the print settings information of the printer driver and different drivers handle access to the option differently. The user will need to investigate how the change is made in his/her specific configuration.
- Q:** A few districts have identified a problem printing to HP Laserjet 5si printers. For example:
- When a print command is issued from the RPI application under Windows 95 to print to an HP Laserjet 5si printer on the network (Novell), it crashes the printer. Print jobs to other types of printers work fine.

- We had no problems printing to the HP Laserjet 3's and 4's, but when we upgraded to the 5si we kept on getting errors.

**A:** As far as we have been able to determine, this problem is related to using the new 5si printer driver. Using the older HP Laserjet III driver will allow districts to print to the 5si. Claris (the vendor of the Filemaker Pro software used to develop the RPI application) is aware of the problem but has no solution at this time.

**Q:** We get an "out of memory" error when trying to print RPI Calculation Worksheets to older HP Laserjet 3's and 4's. "Text" information (e.g., PSRs for the training case studies) prints fine, however. In landscape orientation, lines overprint each other making the output unreadable.

**A:** The colored graphical format of the worksheets may require more memory than the older printers have. Try switching the printing mode from color to monochrome if your driver supports that change. If not, you may benefit from the new text-based Calculation Worksheet report available in the new version of the application (RPIAPP 1.1, see "New Developments," and Attachment 1).

**Q:** If you click on the "Calculate RPI Score" button after entering data into the worksheet, the RPI score appears at the bottom of the Worksheet. If you then go back and change the response to one of the Yes/No radio button fields (e.g., drug history or employment) and click on the "Calculate" button again, a new calculation is done and, where appropriate, a new score appears. However, if you change one of the text fields (i.e., Number of arrests, Date of Supervision, or Date of Birth) and immediately click on the "Calculate" button, a new score does not appear (even when it should). The new text information is not being taken into account when the calculation occurs, even though the new information does appear on the screen. However, if you make the text change and then tab to the next field or click on one of the other fields first and then click on the Calculate button, it does do the recalculation. Why does this happen?

**A:** The application requires that the field be "set" before the information is considered changed. Due to the nature of radio buttons just clicking on the button sets the data, but for text fields you must move to another field to "set" the one that was changed. We are looking into possibilities of doing a "set" automatically in the background when the user clicks on the "Calculate RPI" button but that is not implemented yet.

**Q:** There is a problem with the color scheme used for the screens in the application; it is very difficult to read.

**A:** Try resetting the monitor display mode from color or grayscale to monochrome.

**Q:** Does the RPI application work on a network?

**A:** A single copy of the application can be placed on a server and the POs can access it from there one-at-a-time. We are currently investigating the feasibility of providing a concurrent multi-user version (see “New Developments”) but it will require setting certain parameters and making adjustments on the individual district networks (e.g., IPX/SPX drivers). Since there are many different network configurations currently operating in the districts the RPI technical support staff may not be able to identify the exact settings needed on a particular system, but if you would be interested in trying to use the multi-user version if one is developed, please contact the FJC RPI Coordinator.

**Q:** Can we get greater access to the stored cases to display the information differently, select subsamples, or do analyses?

**A:** The case retention capability was intended to give an officer a quick and easy way to store case information, to retrieve it for review, or to print out worksheets for the files. We did not intend to provide full database functionality. The best way to get that expanded capability is to export the data to a separate file and then read the data into a spreadsheet or database application. A new “Export Records” button has been implemented in the new version of the application (RPIAPP 1.1, see “New Developments”) to assist officers in performing this function.

It is possible to export offender data from the current version of the application, but you must go through a series of screens and prompts. If you are interested in learning more about exporting cases, please contact the FJC RPI Coordinator.

**Q:** There were various questions asking how to get additional information on the RPI items. For example:

- The “Help” button available on the Worksheet screen doesn’t provide enough information about how to score the individual items.
- We need greater clarification of items.

**A:** The “Help” button provides basic information about how to use the application and what options are available. Definitions and additional clarifying information about each item, can be obtained by double clicking on the item of interest when you are working in the Calculation Worksheet.

The *RPI Application Guide* (November 1997) provides this same information in hard-copy format. This *FAQs* bulletin also provides clarifying information. If you need information on a particular issue or scenario that is not covered in these sources, please contact your RPI Coordinator for additional assistance.

- Q:** We need case support information in a written format. It is too hard to go back and forth between screens to look up the answers to the questions.
- A:** All of the case supporting materials can be printed out by clicking the “Print” button on each screen. In addition, the *RPI Application Guide* (November 1997) also provides this same information in hard-copy format.

## Date Supervision Started:

This is the date the offender started a period of active supervision in the district.

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** What date should be used for the start of supervision when calculating the RPI during the PSI stage?

**A:** The RPI is designed to be completed by the officer supervising the offender. A few questions require knowing the offender's status (e.g., age, employment status or living arrangements) at the start of active supervision. An RPI score calculated at the time the presentence report was written would not have the correct information for those items. This may be a change in procedures for some offices that always had the RPS80 and SFS calculated by officers in the presentence unit.

If it is desired, **for advisory purposes only**, the RPI score can be calculated for inclusion in the PSR, but it should be calculated using the offender's status at the time the PSR is written and the PSR's date for the Date Supervision Started. Such an advisory RPI score cannot be used when the offender starts supervision; a new RPI score must be calculated that takes into account the offender's status at the start of supervision (see Attachment 3).

**Q:** Several people disagreed with the supervision start date in Case Study 3. They asked whether the supervision start date should be the date the defendant entered the halfway house, especially since the defendant is not confined to the halfway house and the probation officer is considered to be actively supervising the case?

**A:** After discussing several variations of this situation with different probation officers, we agree that the facts as presented in Case Study 3 are not as complete or clear as they should be. In developing the case we expected that the time in the halfway house would be counted as "inactive" rather than "active" supervision -- although we didn't use those distinguishing words -- and that "active" supervision would only commence once the offender was released from the halfway house. This is consistent with the statement in the background notes that the two concurrent five year terms of probation "commenced after a 90-day stay at a halfway house". Under those conditions the June date for the start of supervision, as used in the test case, would be correct.

The way this situation and others similar to it are handled, however, varies greatly throughout the districts and our explanation was confusing. To address this definitional problem, and to clarify the interaction between the RPI and PACTS, we have changed the focus on how to decide what the "Date Supervision Started" is. **Instead of using the date the offender has "access to the street" which was originally the deciding factor in the RPI application, we now**

**ask officers to use the date the period of “active” supervision started in their district.**

Therefore, if the offender’s assignment to a halfway house or treatment center causes an initial supervision period to be in an “inactive” or “Bureau of Prison” status, then an RPI does not need to be computed. However, once supervision status is classified as “active” then an RPI must be calculated regardless of whether the offender has been released from or is still residing in an interim facility. The responses to the employment and living arrangement items in the model must accurately reflect the offender’s situation at the start of active supervision (e.g., an offender in a treatment center is not living with a spouse or children) and not the situation that is expected to be true upon the release from such a facility (see Attachment 3).

For Jeffrey Silver in Case Study 3, if the period in the halfway house was considered “active” supervision instead of inactive, the “Date Supervision Started” would change to March 26, 1997 and the response to the item “Was the offender living with a spouse and/or children at the start of supervision?” would change from “Yes” to “No”. The 3-month age difference has no effect on the calculated RPI score. The change in living arrangements, however, would change Silver’s score from 5 to 7.

## How many times was the offender arrested prior to the instant offense (0-15)?

This count includes all local, state, and federal arrests, regardless of the final disposition of the case (you are counting any arrest, not only arrests that led to convictions). Also, include all juvenile arrests known, including “status” offenses (e.g., child in need of supervision, truancy) as well as tribal and foreign offenses. Although it is sometimes difficult to obtain information about these arrests (i.e., juvenile, tribal and foreign), when it is available including this information provides a more complete picture of the offender’s criminal history. The number entered should range from 0 to 15. If more than 15 arrests have occurred, enter 15.

As a general rule-of-thumb: If the arrest would be included in any of the sections of a PSR or on an NCIC report then it should be included in the counts here. You may also have to include events that you know about but that might not appear on those reports, such as juvenile or tribal arrests.

In determining when an arrest occurred, the date of the arrest (or if an arrest was not made, the date of voluntary surrender, detention or summons) for the offense should be used. It is this date that is typically given in the listing of prior offenses in the PSR and also the date used on the NCIC report. This date is more consistently known and available than the date the actual criminal behavior occurred because the behavior involved in an offense may have been conducted over a long, sometimes indeterminate, period of time. **If the date of arrest for another offense occurs prior to the date of the arrest for the instant offense, then it should be counted as a prior arrest.**

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** Why do a new NCIC check?

**A:** The purpose of getting an up-to-date NCIC check is to insure that you have identified all prior arrests. Presentence reports frequently list only convictions rather than arrests and may not include juvenile arrests, tribal arrests, etc. This check may have an impact on resources and may affect the way arrests are handled in future PSR’s.

**Q:** Is a conviction noted in the PSR considered an arrest?

**A:** Yes. Although you must count all arrests not only convictions, it can be assumed that a conviction was preceded by an arrest, warrant, summons, or some other event that is equivalent to an arrest for purposes of this model.

**Q:** Do probation or parole violations count as arrests? Do intakes at prison count?

**A:** A violation of the terms of supervision that leads to an actual arrest (e.g., felon in possession of a firearm) would be counted as an arrest. However, technical violations that do not lead to an arrest (e.g., positive urinalysis) should not be counted, even if ultimately supervision is revoked for the technical reasons.

Periods of incarceration should not be added into the count separately; presumably the arrest that led to the incarceration was already included. However, criminal activity while in prison that resulted in the “equivalent” of an arrest (e.g., an investigation and prosecution for assault) should be counted.

**Q:** If an offender is arrested on three counts of burglary, does that count as one arrest or three?

**A:** Under most circumstances that would count as a single arrest event even though multiple activities were involved in the criminal behavior. However, different districts and different prosecutorial styles might lead the charges to be filed separately, and then the count could be higher. The best guidance to use in counting arrests in situations like these is to determine how the information would be presented in a PSR. If you would enter the arrest information multiple times when listing criminal history information then count them as multiple arrests; if you would list it only once, count it only once.

**Q:** Do we count “complaints” that can lead to convictions but that are not technically arrests? That is, a complaint is filed, a summons is issued for the individual to appear in court, and a hearing and adjudication is held, but, because they appeared in response to the summons, no “arrest” was made.

**A:** Count the complaints as arrests.

**Q:** There were several similar questions dealing primarily with whether petty offenses that often result in a ticket or fine rather than an arrest, should be counted as arrests.

- Does driving without a license count (or other “status” type driving offenses, such as getting pulled over for having your registration out of date)? Repeat offenders actually get incarcerated.

- Does an arrest for dog-at-large offenses count (i.e., violation of leash laws)?
- Should all traffic violations be included when calculating the number of prior arrests?

**A:** The answer is "Yes." If an actual arrest was made (not just the issuance of a ticket or a warning given) then it should be counted as an arrest. Sometimes there are initial occurrences of the behavior (e.g., driving with an expired license) that result in just a fine or warning, but once it is repeated an actual arrest occurs. You should not count the lead-up offenses that received warnings, but you should count the ultimate occurrence that resulted in an arrest. This does mean that the same behavior is handled differently based on the action taken by the police officer.

**This is a clarification of one of the examples given in the RPI application for this item which indicated "Don't count arrests for failure to pay parking tickets..." Under this new guidance, if the offender was actually arrested, and not just warned or fined, then it should be counted as an arrest.**

**Q:** Counting all arrests, even those for petty offenses like traffic offenses makes an otherwise low risk case come up with a high RPI score.

**A:** Actual arrests that appear in a PSR and/or on a federal or state records check must be counted (see the previous question). Although these offenses may sound trivial and officers have voiced concern regarding the effect of such arrests "bumping up" the RPI score, the officer must remember that the RPI is an indicator of the likelihood an offender will recidivate while under supervision. "Recidivate" is a broad term and includes any new arrest or revocation for whatever reason. An individual that has repeatedly been arrested for offenses in the past, has a greater likelihood of being arrested in the future. Therefore a "bumped up" RPI score is a reasonable outcome that reflects the increased likelihood of rearrest, albeit for a misdemeanor offense. The officer, however, in the supervision plan should tailor the risk-control efforts to the actual situation and the type of risk implied.

**Q:** On a re-parole case (i.e., offender was on parole on the original offense, had parole revoked for technical violations, was sent back to prison, and is now paroled again), does the parole violation count toward prior arrests?

**A:** No, parole violations should actually be handled differently. Essentially the parole violation becomes the new "instant" offense and the original instant offense is now counted as a prior. The circumstances surrounding the supervision violation (e.g., arrested for drug dealing) supersede the

circumstances surrounding the original instant offense (e.g., armed robbery) when answering the RPI instant offense question.

- Q:** There is a problem counting offenses in Case Study 3. There are only six arrests because two of the arrests on the NCIC report occurred after the date of the instant offense (May 5th).
- A:** This is an issue of what date to use when determining what is a prior offense. The date of the arrest for the offense should be used in these comparisons rather than the date the criminal behavior occurred (see clarifying note above). In Case Study 3, eight arrests occurred prior to the arrest on the instant offense (October 3, 1996), even though two of those arrests occurred after the criminal behavior (i.e., sending in the false tax return on May 5th).
- Q:** In Case Study 3, nine arrests appear in the NCIC report, but only eight priors are counted towards the calculation of the RPI. Which arrest isn't counted and why?
- A:** The last arrest listed on the NCIC report is actually the instant offense and should not be counted among the priors. This scenario was inserted into the case intentionally to demonstrate a problem that may occur when updated NCIC checks are done some time after the instant offense.
- Q:** Why does the RPI use a different definition of criminal history than what is used in the PSR or Sentencing Guidelines? It's confusing.
- A:** As is discussed above in the section on the development of the RPI, several variations of items representing criminal history were evaluated in the modeling process. The final combination of items, including prior arrests rather than convictions or some other definition, proved to be the most predictive and thus was chosen for the model.

## **Was a weapon used in the commission of the instant offense?**

This item includes the actual use of a weapon during the commission of the instant offense. All types of weapons, not only firearms, are included. "Use" includes any possession of a weapon even if it was not brandished, but it does not include the threat of a weapon that the offender did not actually possess. Many things that are not normally considered weapons (e.g., tools, sports equipment, belts, boots, dogs) can be used as weapons. However, unless it was used in a threatening or harmful way, an item of this type should not be considered a weapon.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

- Q:** If an accomplice has a weapon, but the offender does not, how is that counted (e.g., two men robbing a bank together, one has a gun, the other doesn't)?
- A:** Count it as use of a weapon because it was used in the offense even if not actually handled by the offender.
- Q:** Is the following scenario considered a weapon used in the commission of the instant offense? An individual with no police record enters into an agreement to purchase firearms for a drug dealer. Immediately after the purchase, the firearms are given to the drug dealer.
- A:** No. In this situation the individual purchasing the guns is not using the weapon to commit an offense. The underlying offense is something other than the use of the weapon.
- Q:** What about the purchase of a weapon by a convicted felon? Is this considered use of a weapon?
- A:** Yes. Generally, felons cannot purchase weapons, if they do they violate a condition of their supervision and can be revoked. If such a purchase is made it would be counted as use of a weapon.
- Q:** How much "in possession" does the weapon have to be? A gun under the table during a drug buy? How about in the car?

- A:** If it was accessible enough to the offender that it could have been used during the commission of the crime, then count it as being possessed. So, a gun under the table should be scored “Yes”. For weapons in the car, it depends on how close the offender was to the car. If the car was down the street, it probably should be scored “No”; if the offender is standing next to the car and has access to it, then it should be scored “Yes”. These distinctions are somewhat different from the criteria used to determine the existence of a weapon for prosecution or sentencing guidelines calculation purposes.
- Q:** Is the following scenario considered a weapon used in the commission of the instant offense? An individual is pulled over by a police officer who subsequently searches his car and finds several boxes of bullets, but no gun. Upon further investigation by the police officer, the individual is arrested and charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm.
- A:** No, bullets by themselves are not considered a weapon. Again, this is different from the determination that could be made for sentencing guidelines calculation purposes, because the guidelines specifically include ammunition.
- Q:** Can a body part be considered a weapon? For example, an individual hits someone on top of their head with their fists and the person dies.
- A:** This question can only be answered on a case-by-case basis. If the individual is a professional boxer, possibly, but an average offender probably not. In many of these cases, the probation officer has to use situation specific information in determining how the item should be coded.

## **Was the offender employed at the start of supervision?**

To be considered employed, an offender must be working at the time supervision starts or have verified employment that will start within a week. Both full-time employment and part-time employment (regular and consistent hours; generally, 20 hours a week or more) count. Verified self-employment that generates a consistent income equivalent to at least 20 hours of work a week is considered employment. Only legal employment counts.

In general, anyone who is capable of working but is not working is considered unemployed, even if he or she is otherwise productively occupied. Students, homemakers, and retired persons who are capable of employment are considered unemployed.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

- Q:** In your example of a construction worker with a broken leg, shouldn't the worker be considered "employed" and not "unemployed" as it reads in the program?
- A:** No, the example is correct, although perhaps not as clear as it should be. A construction worker who breaks his leg and is laid off the job because he is unable to do construction work is considered "unemployed." His injury may make it impossible to do the work he was used to doing, but it does not make him disabled and unable to perform any kind of work. He would still be able to work in many other occupations. This should be contrasted to an individual who has a severe medical condition and is physically unable to perform any work. Even if the condition is expected to be temporary, it is the situation at the time supervision starts that controls how this question is answered.

## **Does the offender have a history of illegal drug usage or alcohol abuse?**

Illegal drug usage includes intermittent drug use and frequent casual use as well as addiction. One or two instances of drug usage or very infrequent experimentation would not fall into this category. A history of abusing legal prescription drugs also counts as drug usage for this category.

A history of alcohol abuse may be acknowledged by the offender or indicated through a pattern of alcohol related crimes (for example, a pattern of DWI arrests or domestic violence arrests while under the influence of alcohol). The casual use of alcohol should not be counted.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

- Q:** Please define “few times a year” as currently found in the explanation section describing illegal drug usage. Does drug use on four occasions equal a few times? Can you provide a specific number?
- A:** It’s difficult to provide a specific number in a vacuum. Someone who actually used drugs “a few times a year” over the course of several years should be scored “Yes.” In contrast, someone whose only use was at parties 2 or 3 times several years ago, with no use since then, probably should be scored “No.” However, if the use was heavy at the time, even if several years have passed with no usage, the item should be scored “Yes.” In many cases, the officer will have additional information that will help him/her in responding to the item.

## Has the offender ever absconded from a previous period of supervision?

This category includes all levels of federal, state, and local supervision. To be counted there must have been some official mention of the absconding in the offender's file or criminal database or some official action taken (e.g., a warrant filed). Escapes from incarceration are not included.

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** There is a suspicion of some violation of probation. A "surrender hearing" is set and notice is sent to probationer to appear. The probationer does not appear, so a warrant is issued for failure to appear. These are typically "paper supervision" cases that are not actively being supervised, the PO doesn't know if the probationer has actually left the district, just that he didn't appear for the hearing. Is that absconding?

**A:** Yes, if the offender failed to appear when required and an official action was taken (e.g., issuing a warrant) then the offender should be considered to have absconded.

**Q:** What if there is an offender who in the past was arrested and adjudicated by the state system. He was sentenced to imprisonment but a part of that term was spent in a halfway house. While in the halfway house he was still under prison authority and was not yet a state probation case. He fled from the halfway house. Is this considered an escape or absconding?

**A:** This situation should be considered an escape, and should not be counted in scoring the absconding item in the RPI. Although the offender was in a halfway house and not a prison, he was still under the authority of the prison and was not under supervision. Prison authorities have numerous residence options these days and the type of residence should not be the deciding factor. Instead, the determining factor is whether the offender is on some active supervision status. If the offender had already been on active supervision during the time in the halfway house then it would be both escape and absconding.

**This is a clarification of previous guidance on this item that said to count running away from a halfway house as absconding.**

**Q:** How is running away from a juvenile detention center or youth home counted? In some instances, the juvenile is placed at a center by a social service agency and not the court.

**A:** Running away from a juvenile home would not be considered absconding unless as part of the conditions of that placement the juvenile was placed on supervision by a correctional authority.

This question is similar to the previous question. The determining factor should be whether an active term of supervision was in place at the time the flight occurred.

## **Does the offender have a college degree?**

A college degree includes associate's, bachelor's, master's, or professional (J.D., M.D., Ph.D., M.B.A., etc.) degrees issued by an accredited institution. Vocational and technical/trade certificates are not included.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q:** We are a field test district and during the training we were told to count trade degrees, but the information in the RPI application says they shouldn't be counted. What is correct?

**A:** Do not count vocational or trade degrees or certificates when answering this item; only college degrees from an accredited institution should be included. Your confusion on this issue stems from your participation in the field test of the model. The original version of the RPI that was used in the field test districts did include technical degrees as satisfying this item. However, during the field test we learned that there were too many different possibilities of certificates and training that could possibly qualify and it was very difficult to decide which should be included and which shouldn't. Therefore, after the field test, the model was changed to exclude technical degrees in order to make this item easier to score and the responses more consistent.

**Q:** Isn't it unfair to exclude vocational degrees?

**A:** Excluding vocational degrees from this item is not intended as a value judgment on such degrees. As indicated above, the exclusion of vocational degrees was done for operational purposes and in an effort to base the scoring on a definition that could be easily and consistently applied.

## **Was the offender living with a spouse and/or children at the start of supervision?**

For the purposes of this item, "spouse" includes only someone to whom the offender is legally married. Common-law spouses or domestic partners who do not have a legal marriage license should not be counted. To be counted for this item, the child or children must be the biological or legally adopted children of the offender. Children of a spouse or partner who are not also children of the offender do not satisfy this item.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q:** Why are common-law spouses excluded?

**A:** Their exclusion was intentional because we found that offenders with common-law spouses recidivated at a higher rate than those who were living with “legal” spouses at the start of supervision. A common-law living arrangement was not an indicator of success.

**Q:** Do homosexual marriages or domestic partnership agreements count as living with a spouse at the time of supervision?

**A:** Whether this type of arrangement counts turns on the presence and legality of a marriage license. At this time, no state has legalized homosexual marriages. Domestic partnership agreements—even though they are valid legal contracts for other purposes in some jurisdictions—are not equivalent to a legal marriage license.

**Q:** Incomplete data on the parentage of the child in Case Study 3 makes it difficult to score this item.

**A:** The situation in Case Study 3 was intended to show that often the scoring of some of these items is not as clear-cut as one would hope. In the hypothetical, the officer decided that since the child could have been the biological son of the offender, and since the offender accepted him as such, that this item could be scored “Yes” even without explicit proof of paternity. In scoring actual cases, the probation officer must decide what level of verification is necessary before he or she is confident in the way an item has been answered. This is true for all of the items, not just this one.

# Attachment 1

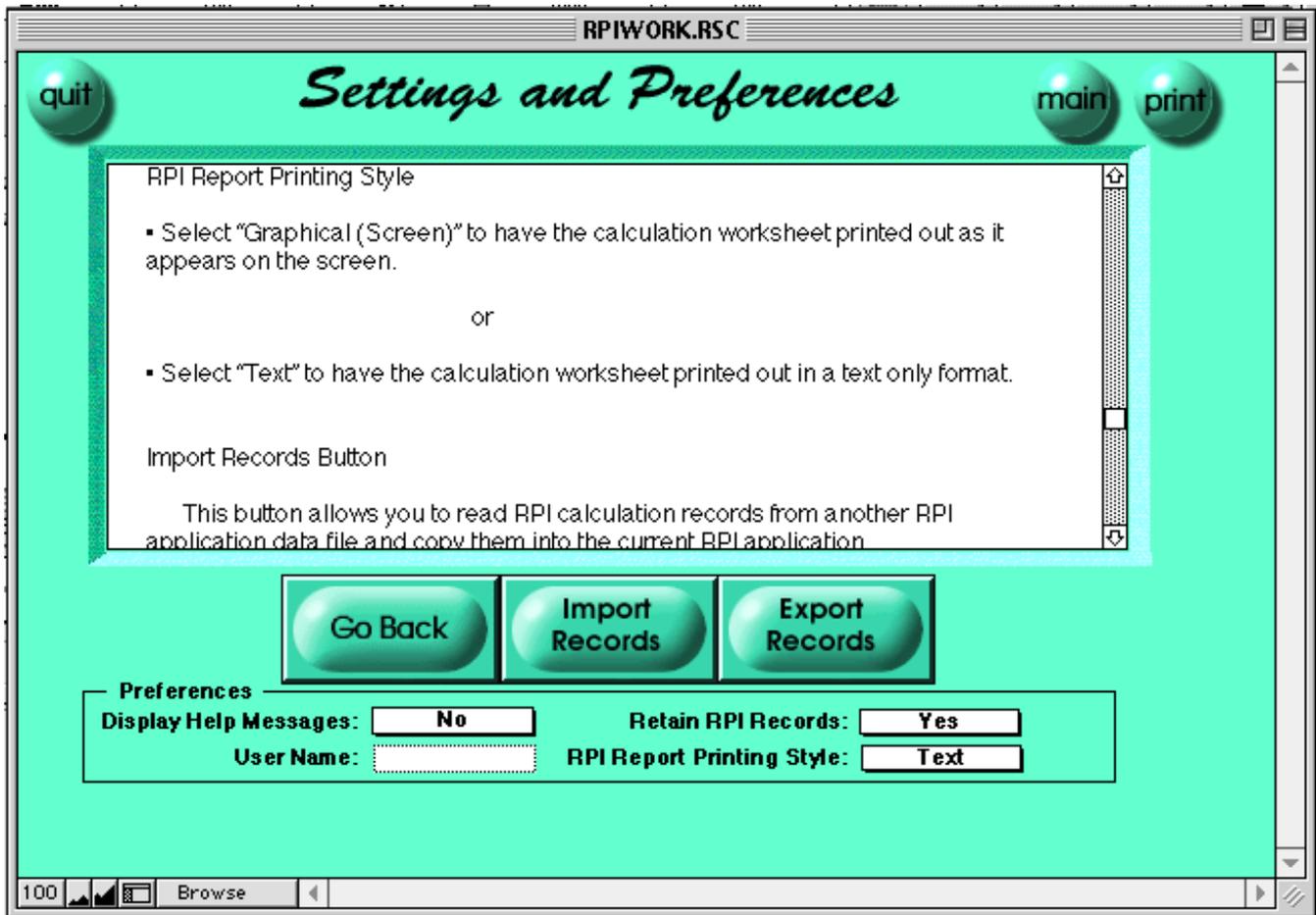
## New Text RPI Calculation Worksheet Report

RPIWORK.RSC	
<b>Risk Prediction Index Calculation Worksheet</b>	
Offenders Name: <b>Jones, Jack S.</b>	
Probation Officer: <b>Smith, Mary</b>	
Date Calculated: <b>January 21, 1998</b>	
Date Supervision Started: <b>December 4, 1997</b>	
<hr/>	
What was the offender's date of birth?	<b>5/17/1975</b>
How many times was the offender arrested prior to the instant offense (0-15)?	<b>2</b>
Was a weapon used in the commission of the instant offense?	<b>NO</b>
Was the offender employed at the start of supervision?	<b>NO</b>
Does the offender have a history of illegal drug usage or alcohol abuse?	<b>YES</b>
Has the offender ever absconded from a previous period of supervision?	<b>NO</b>
Does the offender have a college degree?	<b>NO</b>
Was the offender living with a spouse and/or children at the start of supervision?	<b>YES</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Calculated RPI Score</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Comments</b>	
Offender just moved to a new apartment; wife is expecting their 2nd child in March.	
100 Preview	



## Attachment 2

### New RPI Calculation Worksheet Settings and Preferences Screen



### Text of New Settings and Preferences Instructions

You can adapt the Worksheet module of this application for your personal use by changing the settings below. (These preferences don't affect the Training module except for RPI Report Printing Style.)

#### Display Help Messages

- Select "yes" to continue to display the help messages on each screen.

or

- Select "no" to suppress the help messages.

It's a good idea to familiarize yourself with this module's capabilities before suppressing the help messages. If you want to read a help message after clicking "no," you can either click the "help" button at the top of the appropriate screen or come back to this screen and select "yes."

### **Retain RPI Records**

- Select "yes" to retain a record of the cases that you score using the RPI. The program will store the worksheet plus any additional information you choose to enter under "Case Comments." If this function is set on "yes," you can still choose to delete any particular record by clicking the "Delete Case" button. To learn more about case storage, click the "Case Listing" button at the bottom of the worksheet.

or

- Select "no" to have all worksheets deleted automatically when you exit the program.

### **User Name**

- To have your name entered automatically on the worksheet for every new case you open in this program, enter your name here.

### **RPI Report Printing Style**

- Select "Graphical (Screen)" to have the calculation worksheet printed out as it appears on the screen.

or

- Select "Text" to have the calculation worksheet printed out in a text only format.

### **Import Records Button**

This button allows you to read RPI calculation records from another RPI application data file and copy them into the current RPI application.

### **Export Records Button**

This button allows you to write out all of the RPI calculation records in your current RPI application in a tab-delimited format that can be read into a spreadsheet or database application. This button will export the following fields: the offender's name, the probation officer's name, the date the RPI score was calculated, the date supervision started, the offender's date of birth, the number of prior offenses, whether a weapon was used in the instant offense, the offender's employment status, the offender's drug

history, whether the offender had ever absconded from a previous period of supervision, whether the offender has college degree, the offender's living arrangements, the offender's RPI score, the offender's age at the start of supervision, and any comments related to the case.



# Attachment 3

September 19, 1997

## MEMORANDUM TO ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS

**SUBJECT:** Implementation of the Risk Prediction Index  
**(IMPORTANT INFORMATION)**

Reference is made to the previous memorandum of April 22, 1997 regarding the implementation of the Risk Prediction Index (RPI). As you know, the RPI supersedes the use of the Risk Prediction Scale-1980 and is to be calculated for all newly received offenders under probation, supervised release, parole, special parole, and mandatory release supervision as of September 1, 1997. Districts have been issued PACTS Release Version 6.0, which contains software modifications for capturing the RPI. Systems managers have been provided with documentation to assist them in enabling the upgrade.

Several technical questions have arisen as to how the RPI should be entered into PACTS. The attached serves to address these frequently asked questions. Questions about PACTS Release Version 6.0 and entering the RPI into PACTS should be addressed to the User Support Branch at the Technology Training and Support Division at 210/530-6200, extension 9. General questions about PACTS may be addressed to Management Analyst Rick Ransom at 202/273-1635.

Eunice R. Holt Jones

Attachment

## ENTERING THE RPI INTO PACTS

The Risk Prediction Indicator (RPI) is to be calculated when initial supervision begins in a case. Its greatest utility is to assist in determining risk for the preparation of the Initial Case Supervision Plan (ICSP). Although the RPI is intended as a tool to assist in determining the supervision plan, it does not create supervision levels nor does its value have any effect on the workload credit given for supervision cases. The RPI should not be recalculated or revised in PACTS when the supervision plan changes. The only valid change to an RPI entered into PACTS is to correct a mistake or to adjust an RPI that was entered for an initially inactive case. Additional instructions concerning the entry of the RPI follow below.

◇ RPI for Parolees and Mandatory Releasees (Old Law Cases) - The RPI must be calculated and entered into the PACTS records of all offenders beginning a new period of active supervision after September 1, 1997, including those convicted prior to the implementation of Federal sentencing guidelines and now released on parole, mandatory release, and special parole.

◇ Salient Factor Score (SFS) - The SFS is no longer required to be calculated for supervision cases. If an officer is proposing a parole case for early termination, the SFS is to be calculated and entered at that time.

◇ Reinstatements - The RPI should not be recalculated when offenders are reinstated to active supervision following a previous removal. The original value shown in the PACTS record should remain. Recalculation of the RPI is appropriate only for new cases, re-releases, and active supervision following initially inactive status.

◇ Use of RPI in Presentence Investigation Report (PSR) - Officers may choose to calculate the RPI for advisory purposes only when preparing a PSR. (Items can be answered using the offender's status at the time the PSR is conducted and using the date of the PSR for the "Date Supervision Started.") However, the RPI cannot be captured in PACTS at this point in the progression of a case. When supervision begins, a new RPI is to be calculated because an offender's circumstances (e.g., living arrangements or job status) may result in different answers to questions posed in the RPI calculation.

◇ Calculation of RPI in Cases With No Presentence Report - The RPI is to be calculated for all active supervision cases, including those in which presentence investigations were not conducted. The items necessary to calculate the RPI can be determined from a criminal history records check, other case data, and from an interview with the offender.

◇ Cases Received by Transfer - A new RPI should be calculated and entered into PACTS for all cases received by transfer or re-transfer after September 1, 1997. The RPI calculated in the previous district of supervision often will not apply in the new district since the offender's circumstances might change (e.g., living arrangements and job status).

◇ Cases That Begin as Initially Inactive- The RPI should not be calculated when a case is received in initially inactive status. If the case is subsequently moved to active, an RPI is to be calculated at that time using the date of removal to active supervision as the "Date Supervision Started."

◇ Unsupervised Probation and BOP Cases - The RPI is not relevant to cases not requiring supervision since it is a tool to assist officers with risk assessment. Records entered into PACTS for offenders sentenced to terms of unsupervised probation or still under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Prisons do not require an RPI.



## Attachment 4

### Risk Prediction Index Hand-Calculation Worksheet

Offender's Name:

PO's Name:

Date Calculated:

Date Supervision Started:

Question	Answer	Directions	Value
What was the offender's age at the start of supervision?		Look up value for age on attached worksheet	
How many times was the offender arrested prior to the instant offense (0-15)?		Multiply answer by <b>13</b> ----> if 0 leave blank	
Was a weapon used in the commission of the instant offense?	Yes: ____ No: ____	If <b>Yes</b> : enter <b>51</b> ----> otherwise leave blank	
Was the offender employed at the start of supervision?	Yes: ____ No: ____	If <b>No</b> : enter <b>42</b> ----> otherwise leave blank	
Does the offender have a history of illegal drug usage or alcohol abuse?	Yes: ____ No: ____	If <b>Yes</b> : enter <b>58</b> ----> otherwise leave blank	
Has the offender ever absconded from a previous period of supervision?	Yes: ____ No: ____	If <b>Yes</b> : enter <b>98</b> ----> otherwise leave blank	
Does the offender have a college degree?	Yes: ____ No: ____	If <b>No</b> : enter <b>84</b> ----> otherwise leave blank	
Was the offender living with a spouse and/or children at the start of supervision?	Yes: ____ No: ____	If <b>No</b> : enter <b>51</b> ----> otherwise leave blank	
<b>Preliminary Score</b>		Add up the numbers in the Value column	
<b>Calculated RPI Score</b>		Look up value for the RPI Score on the attached worksheet	

**Risk Prediction Index  
Hand-Calculation Worksheet Attachments**

**Age Table**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Value</b>
11 or younger	356	31	358	51	274	71	105
12	358	32	356	52	267	72	94
13	360	33	353	53	261	73	83
14	362	34	351	54	254	74	72
15	363	35	348	55	247	75	60
16	364	36	345	56	240	76	49
17	365	37	341	57	232	77	37
18	366	38	338	58	224	78	25
19	367	39	334	59	216	79	13
20	367	40	331	60	208	80 or older	0
21	368	41	326	61	200		
22	368	42	322	62	191		
23	367	43	318	63	183		
24	367	44	313	64	174		
25	366	45	308	65	164		
26	365	46	303	66	155		
27	364	47	297	67	145		
28	363	48	292	68	135		
29	361	49	286	69	125		
30	360	50	280	70	115		

**RPI Score Table**

<b>If the Preliminary Score is</b>	<b>the RPI Score is</b>
less than or equal to 361	0
from 362 to 482	1
from 483 to 546	2
from 547 to 594	3
from 595 to 635	4
from 636 to 676	5
from 677 to 717	6
from 718 to 765	7
from 766 to 829	8
greater than or equal to 830	9