

Hazing Fact Sheet

“Clearing Up the Gray Areas”

Definition: (As adapted from FIPG)

"Any action taken or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off fraternity premises, to produce **mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule**. Such activities may include but are not limited to the following: use of alcohol; paddling in any form; creation of excessive fatigue; physical and psychological shocks; quests, treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, road trips or any other such activities carried on outside or inside of the confines of the chapter house; wearing of public apparel which is conspicuous and not normally in good taste; engaging in public stunts and buffoonery; morally degrading or humiliating games and activities; and any other activities which are not consistent with fraternal law, ritual or policy or the regulations and policies of the educational institution."

- If you have to ask if it's hazing, it is.
- If in doubt, call your adviser. If you won't pick up the phone, you have your answer.

EXAMPLES OF HAZING

The following are examples of hazing by category. It is impossible to list all hazing activities, so this list is not intended to be all-inclusive. Each new member activity can be measured against the definition for each category.

A. SUBTLE HAZING: Actions that are against accepted sorority or fraternity standards of conduct, behavior and good tastes. An activity or attitude directed toward a new member or an act which ridicules, humiliates or embarrasses.

EXAMPLES:

1. Never doing anything with the new members.
2. Silence periods for new members.
3. Any form of demerits.
4. Initiates writing progress reports on new members.

5. Requiring new members to call active members Miss, etc.
6. Scavenger hunts for meaningless objects.
7. Phone duty or house duties, if only assigned to new members.
8. Requiring new members to carry New Member Handbook or paddles everywhere to get signatures.
9. Scaring new members with what may happen at initiation.
10. Deprivation of privileges.

B. HARASSMENT HAZING: Anything that causes mental anguish or physical discomfort to the pledge. Any activity directed toward a new member or activity which confuses, frustrates or causes undue stress.

EXAMPLES:

1. Verbal abuse.
2. Any form of questioning under pressure or in an uncomfortable position.
3. Requiring new members to wear ridiculous costumes or perform ridiculous activities.
4. Requiring only new to enter by back door or go up back staircase.
5. Stunt or skit nights/events with demeaning and/or crude skits and/or poems.
6. Requiring new members to perform personal service to actives such as carrying books, running errands, performing maid duties, etc.

Myths of Hazing

Myth #1: Hazing is no more than foolish pranks that sometimes go awry.

Fact: *Hazing is an act of power and control over others --- it is victimization. Hazing is pre-meditated and NOT accidental. Hazing is abusive, degrading and often life-threatening.*

Myth #2: As long as there's no malicious intent, a little hazing should be O.K.

Fact: *Even if there's no malicious "intent" safety may still be a factor in traditional hazing activities that are considered to be "all in good fun." For example, serious accidents have occurred during scavenger hunts and kidnapping trips. Besides, what purpose do such activities serve in promoting the growth and development of group team members?*

Myth #3: Hazing is an effective way to teach respect and develop discipline.

Fact: *First of all, respect must be EARNED--not taught. Victims of hazing rarely report having respect for those who have hazed them. Just like other forms of victimization, hazing breeds mistrust, apathy and alienation.*

Myth #4: If someone agrees to participate in an activity, it can't be considered hazing.

Fact: *In states that have laws against hazing consent of the victim can't be used as a defense in a civil suit. This is because even if someone agrees to participate in a potentially hazardous action it may not be true consent when considering the peer pressure and desire to belong to the group.*

Myth #5: It's difficult to determine whether or not a certain activity is hazing--it's such a gray area sometimes.

Fact: *It's not difficult to decide if an activity is hazing if you use common sense and ask yourself the following questions:*

Questions

Make the following inquiries of each activity to determine whether or not it is hazing.

- 1) Is alcohol involved?*
- 2) Will active/current members of the group refuse to participate with the new members and do exactly what they're being asked to do?*
- 3) Does the activity risk emotional or physical abuse?*
- 4) Is there risk of injury or a question of safety?*
- 5) Do you have any reservation describing the activity to your parents, to a professor or University official?*
- 6) Would you object to the activity being photographed for the school newspaper or filmed by the local TV news crew?*

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," the activity is probably hazing.

Student Code of Conduct Definition of Hazing

(M) Hazing

Doing, requiring or encouraging any act, whether or not the act is voluntarily agreed upon, in conjunction with initiation or continued membership or participation in any group, that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm or humiliation. Such acts may include, but are not limited to, use of alcohol, creation of excessive fatigue, and paddling, punching or kicking in any form.

Ohio Hazing Law

The State of Ohio's Hazing Law is set forth in Section 2307.44 of the Ohio Revised Code. Any person who is subjected to hazing, as defined in division (A) of Section 2903.31 of the Revised Code, may commence a civil action for injury or damages, including mental and physical pain and suffering, that result from the hazing. The action may be brought against any participants in the hazing, any organization whose local or national directors, trustees, or officers authorized, requested, commanded, or tolerated the hazing. If the hazing involves students in a primary, secondary, or post-secondary school, university, college, or any other educational institution, an action may also be brought against any administrator, employee, or faculty member of the school, university, college, or other educational institution. If an administrator, employee, or faculty member is found liable in a civil action for hazing, then notwithstanding Chapter 2743. of the Revised Code, the school, university, college, or other educational institution that employed the administrator, employee, or faculty member may also be held liable.

The negligence or consent of the plaintiff or any assumption of the risk by the plaintiff is not a defense to an action brought pursuant to this section. In an action against a school, university, college, or other educational institution, it is an affirmative defense that the school, university, college or other institution was actively enforcing a policy against hazing at the time the cause of action arose.

Section 2903.31

- (A) As used in this section, "hazing" means doing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of initiation into any student or other organization that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person.
- (B)
 - (1) No person shall recklessly participate in the hazing of another.
 - (2) No administrator, employee, or faculty member of any primary, secondary, or post-secondary school or of any other educational institution, public or private, shall recklessly permit the hazing of any person.
- (C) No administrator, employee, or faculty member of any primary, secondary, or post-secondary school or of any other educational institution, public or private, shall recklessly permit the hazing of any person.