

- ▶ **BUILD AWARENESS OF ORGANIZATION HISTORY:** Invite an older member to talk about the organization's early days, its founding, special organization traditions, and prominent former members.
- ▶ **KNOWLEDGE OF THE GREEK COMMUNITY:** Invite council leaders or advisors to speak on Greek governance including their goals and expectations of the Greek community.
- ▶ **AID CAREER GOALS:** Use college resources for seminars on resume writing, job interview skills; and on various careers.
- ▶ **INVOLVE NEW MEMBERS IN THE COMMUNITY:** Get involved with campus and community service projects. Plan fundraisers for local charitable organizations.
- ▶ **IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH OTHER GREEKS:** Encourage new members to plan social or service projects with other new member classes; work together to plan joint social or service activities.

### Hazing: Myths and Facts

**Myth 1:** Hazing is a problem only for sororities and fraternities.

**Fact:** Hazing is a societal problem. Hazing incidents have been frequently documented in the military, athletic teams, marching bands, religious cults, professional schools and other types of clubs and organizations. Reports of hazing activities in high schools are also on the rise.

**Myth 2:** Hazing is no more than foolish pranks that sometimes go awry.

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

**Myth 3:** 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 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 4:** 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 5:** If someone agrees to participate in an activity, it can't be considered hazing.

**Fact:** In Texas 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 6:** 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:

## Is What You're Doing Hazing?

- ▶ Is alcohol involved?
- ▶ Will active/current members of the group refuse to do exactly what the new members are being asked to do?
- ▶ Does the activity risk emotional or physical harm?
- ▶ Is there risk of injury or a question of safety?
- ▶ Do you have any reservation describing the activity to your parents, to a professor or University official?
- ▶ Would you object to the activity being photographed for the school newspaper or filmed by the local TV news crew?

### Resources

For more information, or to report a hazing incident, contact:

Office of the Dean of Students  
(512) 471-1201

Greek Life and Education  
(512) 471-9700  
[www.texasgreeks.com](http://www.texasgreeks.com)

Student Activities and Leadership  
Development  
(512) 471-3065

University of Texas at Austin  
Police Department  
(512) 471-4441

[www.stophazing.org](http://www.stophazing.org)

# THE TRUTH ABOUT HAZING

Content adapted from  
[www.stophazing.org](http://www.stophazing.org) ©

Greek Life and Education  
Office of the Dean of Students

## Hazing Is Against the Law!

In the state of Texas, **hazing is against the law** and individuals or organizations engaging in hazing could be subject to fines and charged with a criminal offense. They also face potential penalties from The Office of the Dean of Students.

A person can commit a hazing offense not only by engaging in a hazing activity, but also by:

- ▶ soliciting, directing, encouraging, aiding or attempting to aid another in hazing
- ▶ intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly allowing hazing to occur
- ▶ failing to report in writing to the dean of students first-hand knowledge that a hazing incident is planned or has occurred

## Did You Know...

- ▶ The fact that a person consented to a hazing activity is not a defense to prosecution for hazing under the law.
- ▶ Texas state law grants immunity from civil or criminal liability to any person who reports a specific hazing event in good faith and without malice to the Dean of Students.

## Hazing Defined

Hazing is defined as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety

of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include students at an educational institution.

## Some Examples of Hazing

- ▶ Calisthenics, such as push-ups, sit-ups, wall sits, etc.
- ▶ Capturing or kidnapping
- ▶ Confinement in a small space
- ▶ Forced consumption of any food or liquid
- ▶ Interrogations
- ▶ Intimidation
- ▶ Lineups
- ▶ Paddling
- ▶ Personal servitude, such as cleaning, running errands, etc.
- ▶ Sleep deprivation
- ▶ Whipping
- ▶ Yelling or screaming

## Why Hazing Doesn't Work

Listed below are some common hazing practices and the negative consequences they are likely to produce. If you need reasons why hazing is inappropriate, the following should help:

### Calisthenics, shouting, and/or public embarrassment—used individually or with the entire group.

#### Perceived Purpose

- ▶ Generally used for disciplinary purposes—to punish or “shape up” new members who are perceived to be dragging down the group or have been disrespectful.

#### NEGATIVE REACTIONS:

##### Individuals

- ▶ Can lead to a temporary suppression of the problem. Once the new member is initiated, will she/he continue to perform in the best interest of the organization?

- ▶ Will not allow the cause of the problem, if one exists, to surface. At times the new member has a legitimate complaint which would be in the organization's best interest to hear.
- ▶ Possible physical injury—many people have physical weaknesses of which sometimes even they are unaware. If injury occurs, current officers, the university, and the organization can be sued and held liable.

#### Group

- ▶ Can create the attitude that pledgship is a hardship, not an educational period, and that initiation is the end of one's work for the organization instead of the beginning. This can create a general lack of participating and/or interest in the membership.
- ▶ Can lead to the dissatisfaction and possible de-pledging of individuals opposed to this type of discipline. These can, oftentimes, be some of the top individuals.

### Excessive physical or mental demands, on the group as a whole.

#### Perceived Purpose

- ▶ To instill class unity.

#### NEGATIVE REACTIONS:

- ▶ This system can be so successful in instilling new member group unity that, in fact, separate units are created within the organization, and a true organization does not exist.

### Pre-initiation or “Hell” weeks with strenuous and excessive programs and events, physical and mental.

#### Perceived Purpose

- ▶ To create a climax to the new member experience, and develop a true appreciation of initiation.
- ▶ To unify the new member class for the last time.

#### NEGATIVE REACTIONS:

- ▶ The new member is in fact glad to be initiated, not so much for the honor of the event, but for the right to be finished with the work. In this instance, the climax really arrives when the pre-initiation week ends, not when initiation begins. This is another way of strengthening the idea that, “I'm glad pledgship is over because now my work ends,” instead of

the realization that this is just the beginning of one's commitment to organization membership.

- ▶ In programs with a lack of sufficient sleep and strenuous activities designed to make the pledge less cognizant of what is really happening, can rob the new initiate of the true meaning and appreciation of the formal ceremony. Also, as scholarship is supposed to have priority, these programs can in fact be very detrimental to one's academic achievement.
- ▶ If the organization needs this week to unify its new member class, it points to a flaw in the regular pledge program, as this should already have been accomplished.

## Alternatives to Hazing

- ▶ **FOSTER UNITY:** Have the members of your group/organization work together on a community service project or visit a ropes course to work on group cohesiveness, communication and leadership skills.
- ▶ **DEVELOP PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITIES:** Have new members discuss organization weaknesses such as poor recruitment, apathy, and poor scholarship, and plan solutions that the active organization might then adopt.
- ▶ **DEVELOP LEADERSHIP SKILLS:** Encourage participation in school/campus activities outside of the organization. Encourage new members to get involved in organizational committees and/or leadership roles. Develop a peer mentor program within your group for leadership roles. Invite school/community/business leaders into the organization to share their experiences.
- ▶ **INSTILL A SENSE OF MEMBERSHIP:** Plan special events when the entire organization gets together to attend a movie or a play. Plan a “membership circle” when actives and new members participate in a candlelight service in which each person has a chance to express what membership means to them.
- ▶ **PROMOTE SCHOLARSHIP:** Take advantage of your university academic and tutoring services. Designate study hours for members of your organization. Invite university or community experts to discuss test-taking skills, study methods, time management etc.