

HAZING BEHAVIORS

KNOW WHERE YOUR LINE IS

THE DEFINITION

WHAT IS HAZING?

Hazing is any action taken or situation created intentionally to cause embarrassment, harassment or ridicule AND/OR risks emotional and/or physical harm to members of a group or team, regardless of the person's willingness to participate.

STILL CONFUSED? ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

- Would I feel comfortable participating in this activity if my parents were watching?
- Would we get in trouble if the Dean of Students walked by?
- Am I being asked to keep these activities a secret?
- Am I doing anything illegal?
- Does participation violate my values or those of my organization?
- Is it causing emotional distress or stress of any kind to myself or others?
- If someone were injured, would I feel comfortable being investigated by the insurance carrier?
- When I apply for jobs, can I take the on us of having a criminal arrest on my record?
- Would you hesitate to describe this activity to your parents or the police?
- If a videotape of the activity was shown on the news, would you be concerned that the group would get in trouble?
- Would the current members refuse to engage in the same activity?

If you answer affirmatively to any of these questions, there is a good chance that the activity is a form of hazing. If you are still unsure, you can reach out to the FSL staff prior to the event to clarify, without penalty.

THE GRAY AREA

While some activities are easily defined as hazing, others are not. Hazing activities vary in severity and exist along a continuum. At one end are initiation and group-building activities that do not constitute hazing. At the other end are severe forms of hazing that can result in severe psychological trauma, permanent injury, or death. In between there are a range of activities that might be considered low to moderate-level hazing. Answering the following questions will help you decide whether the activity in question is an appropriate new member education activity.

- Is this activity an educational experience?
- Does this activity promote and conform to the ideals and values of the fraternity/sorority?
- Will this activity increase feelings of friendship between new and initiated members of the chapter?
- Is it an activity that new and initiated members participate in together?
- Would you be willing to allow parents to witness this activity? A judge? The College/University President?
- Would you be willing to defend the merit of this activity in a court of law?

IF YOU ANSWER "NO" TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS, IT'S PROBABLY HAZING!

Some group activities can be non-hazing or hazing, depending on how they are done. For example, having new members do skits can be a non-hazing activity. But not if members verbally degrade the performers or throw food at them. Similarly, scavenger hunts are not inherently forms of hazing. But when the list includes things that must be stolen or would likely be humiliating or embarrassing to obtain, then it becomes hazing. Even further, when you add vehicles and any driving component you are taking on additional risk and liability.

Some people find it difficult to determine when a given activity crosses over into hazing. See "Changing a Culture" on the back of this page to determine a best approach for initiating a change in your chapter.

This document is a resource to help interpret policy. Always observe federal, state, local law in addition to national organization policies.

Source: Cornell Hazing Resource Guide [<https://hazing.cornell.edu/>]

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COST OF HAZING

COST TO THE PERSON WHO IS HAZED

- Loss of friendships outside of the organization
- Resentment towards current members
- Exhaustion
- Emotional duress from humiliation/intimidation
- Decreased academic performance
- Stress-related illness
- Accidental injuries
- Inflicted injuries (e.g., from being kicked or beaten)
- Decreased athletic performance
- Physical pain/ Death
- Depression or other mental health problems
- Re-traumatization of past abuse
- Severe intoxication (resulting in medical emergencies)

COST TO THE HAZER

- Time consuming
- Stressful to plan and keep secret
- Discomfort of playing role that is inconsistent with one's values
- Undermines trust with new members
- Creates conflict with members who hold different views
- Risk of judicial, criminal, or civil consequences
- Impact of judicial action on graduate school or government applications
- Potential rejection by prospective employers who are aware of the hazing

COST TO THE GROUP

- Sanctions for getting caught
- Risk losing the organization
- Fosters mistrust between new and current members
- Liability risks
- Poor commitment of members who resent being hazed
- Undermines long-term commitment by alumni
- May drive away desirable new members
- Leads to conflicts with alumni

SELF REPORTING

The Texas Tech Code of Student Conduct allows organizations to partner with the university to jointly investigate incidents that occur in your organization. Self-reporting provides the chapter the opportunity to identify when there is a gap in the behaviors of members and the values of the organization and move forward to hold themselves and members accountable.

CHANGING A CULTURE

Making changes to long standing traditions is not always easy. Eliminating events all together can leave gaps in group unity, individual growth and group identity. We encourage you to consider adjusting events to provide a safe and positive environment.

Ready to make a change, but don't know where to begin? Employing alternatives to hazing doesn't mean holding hands in a circle singing "Kumbaya". A program of activities aimed at replacing hazing will likely need to incorporate some level of challenge or intensity. It may also need to incorporate non-hazing mechanisms of self-governance for holding new members accountable to the expectations of the group. When you are ready to make this next step, talk to the FSL staff and use your national organization's resources to develop a plan.

For more information you may also visit: <https://hazing.cornell.edu/>organization> alternatives ideas>

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