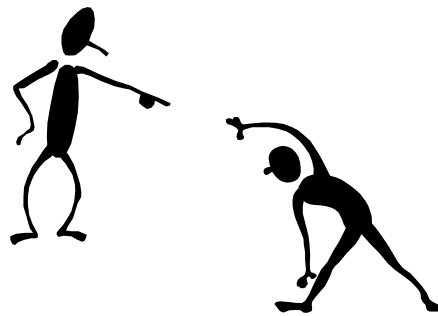
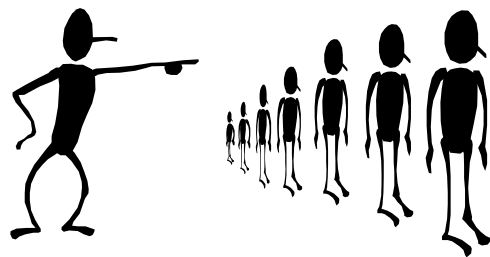
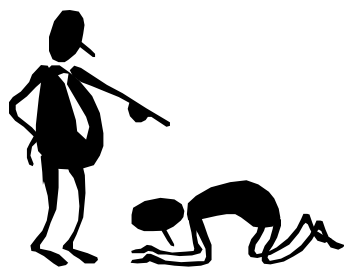


# HAZING: It's not Worth the RISK



**A Resource Guide to Help Eliminate Hazing**

Greek Life  
Office of Student Activities  
The University of Texas at Arlington  
(817) 272-2963  
[www2.uta.edu/stuact/greek](http://www2.uta.edu/stuact/greek)  
[stuact@uta.edu](mailto:stuact@uta.edu)



# ***Myths and Facts about Hazing***

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

FACT: Hazing is a social problem. Hazing incidents have been frequently documented in the military, athletic teams, marching bands, religious cults, professional schools and other types of clubs and/or organizations. Reports of hazing activities in high schools are 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 is victimization. Hazing is premeditated and NOT accidental. Hazing is abusive, degrading and often life threatening.

***Myth #3: As long as there is no malicious intent, a little hazing should be O.K.***

FACT: Even if there is no malicious “intent,” safety may still be a factor in 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 #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.***

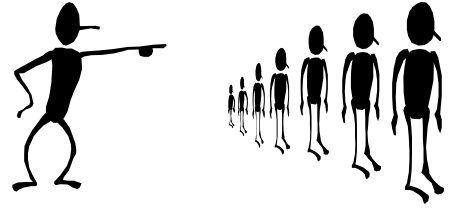
FACT: In states that have laws against hazing, consent of the victim can't be used as a defense in a civil suit. This is even because even if someone agrees to participate in a potentially hazardous action, it may not be true consent when considering the peer pressure and desire to belong to the group.

***Myth #6: It's difficult to determine whether or not a certain activity is hazing – it's such a gray area at times.***

FACT: It's not difficult to decide if an activity is hazing if you use common sense and refer to your campus policy, fraternity or sorority policy, and the supplemental resources regarding hazing.



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



We are **hazers**.

We like to **hurt** people, emotionally and physically. For some reason, that is how we define friendship.

We like to **humiliate** people. It's how we build brotherhood.

We like to **yell** at the new members. It's how we get respect.

We like to **lie** to them. It's how we get trust.

We don't have any ounce of creativity or intelligence, and that is why we **haze**. We're dumb enough to think it has been around forever and too stupid to think of new ideas.

We have **no respect** for the founding values and principles of our fraternity. We aren't true fraternity men.

We are **cowards**.

We're **scared** of change, and **scared** of doing the right thing. The wrong thing is so much easier...

And so we will continue to **haze**. Our chapter will be closed forever soon, but that's okay because our numbers have been going down for years. We don't care that **hazing** is **scaring** people away from fraternities.

Our chapter is **lazy** and **weak**. There is no motivation to do anything. People talk behind each other's back and none of our friendships will survive beyond college.

Maybe someone will **die**; maybe one of us will go to court; maybe we will have to live the thought that someone's desire to build long-lasting friendships and become a stronger person ultimately killed a brother.

We are a **disease**.

We are **hazers**.



*-John Shertzer, North-American Interfraternity Conference*



# Common Excuses for Hazing

Hazing can become so embedded in an organization's culture that the members don't even know why they are doing it. In these cases, convincing members that hazing is wrong may seem like an insurmountable task.

Some members develop a tremendous amount of pride in their organization's hazing practices, and they will argue passionately against change. They refuse to think of other ideas or alternatives.

The following excuses are often expressed when conversations about hazing are started. Below each excuse are responses that can be used to help show others that hazing must stop if fraternities and sororities are going to continue to exist.

Hazing can be stopped, but it won't be easy.

## ***"It builds respect"***

Think about people in your life who you respect, and ask yourself why you respect them. Do you respect your parents, teachers, mentors, or advisors? Did they have to haze you to earn your respect? Think about who humiliated you, or made you feel unaccepted or different. Do you respect them?

## ***"It creates pledge class unity"***

Do new members join a pledge class, or do they join the fraternity or sorority? Pledge class unity creates divisions within the organization. Chapter unity should be the goal.

## ***"They have to earn their letters"***

So, all you have to do is earn your letters for a certain amount of time and then you can coast? Fraternity and Sorority members should be earning their letters every day.

## ***"It's tradition"***

Some may be surprised to learn that it hasn't been around forever. Did our founders haze each other? The ultimate traditions of a fraternity are the values, principles, and rituals. These have been passed down since the beginning of Greek Life. Hazing entered the picture much later.

## ***"Pledging shouldn't be easy"***

Fraternity and Sorority membership in general isn't easy – it requires commitment of both time and responsibility. Is the new member education program creating dedicated brothers and sisters, or simply creating dedicated pledges that will lose motivation immediately upon initiation?

## ***"The new members will feel like they accomplished something"***

This attitude will lead to poor chapter motivation. Hazing causes initiation to be seen as an end, and not a beginning. The new members will feel like their work is done after new member education is over.

## ***"What about the military or sports teams? Don't they haze?"***

Maybe they do, but that is not an excuse for Greek Organizations to haze. Each of these groups is unique, and each tries to accomplish particular goals. Hazing does not help fraternities and sororities accomplish their goals of lifelong brother- and sisterhood. Sports teams and the military typically have policies against hazing as well.

## ***"I was hazed, so should they be"***

This is probably the most common excuse. It is dangerous because it is placing the bonds of fraternity into the hands of hazers. True bonds are developed through experiencing things together, and working with each other toward shared goals. The ritual binds us together, not the hazing practices.

*They were our best members.*

The worked hard to make the fraternity the best possible through *visionary leadership, shared goals, higher integrity, and common principles.*

They also knew how to take the most from the fraternity. They became better citizens, better leaders, better scholars, and better friends. They were able to say with *pride* that when they became members of the fraternity, they became *better men.*

They understood the fraternity's role in the *community* and at the college or university where they attended. They didn't just want to join another campus club. They wanted to join something *larger than themselves*; something which they could mold and shape for *future generations.*

They were everything that is *right* about fraternity.

*They were our best members.*

What is interesting is that these members never wore a pledge button. They never had to carry a notebook to write down interviews of other members. They never stood in a line-up. They never took tests, or did physical exercises for the fraternity. They never said "yes sir" to other members, or had to do frivolous errands for brothers. They were never **hazed**.

They were our worst pledges. In fact, they were never pledges.

They respected the new members as well. They never forced them to drink alcohol, or do drugs. They never branded them, or called them demeaning names. They never made them dress alike, or make fools of themselves on campus. They earned the new members' *respect* by respecting them.

In fact, they are our most respected members. We have pictures of them on our walls, and in our manuals. We have awards named after them. They are *revered*, despite the fact that they were never **hazed**.

They are everything that is *right* about the fraternity.

*They are our founders.*

They didn't need **hazing**, so why do you?



-John Shertzer, North-American Interfraternity Conference



# STOP: Questions to Ask

Before participating in any activity that you think is questionable and could be considered hazing, stop and ask yourself some of these questions:

- Would I want to have a photographer from the local newspaper present to take a picture for publication?
- Would I want my parents to know I was doing this?
- Could I defend my actions in a court of law?
- Do I want to jeopardize my membership in the organization or status in the University?
- Do I want to jeopardize my organization's status with the University or (Inter)National Headquarters?
- Would the activity increase the respect for the organization by non-affiliated members?
- Do my actions serve a constructive, developmental purpose? Is that purpose in line with the values of the organization? Examples of constructive activities and destructive activities are included below.

## Constructive Activities

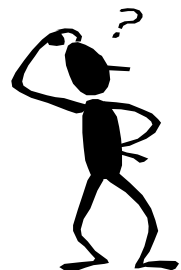
- Holding mandatory study sessions
- Scheduling a pledge class goal setting retreat
- Educating each new member on the responsibilities of each chapter officer, chairman, and chapter operations
- Expecting high scholastic performance
- Conducting meetings exclusively for new members
- Preparing a new member publication and directory
- Sponsoring new member recruitment events for prospective new members
- Appointing or electing officers and chairmen of the new member class by the new member class
- Participating in team building exercises such as ropes courses, paintball, bowling, etc.
- Expecting basic knowledge of the chapter, its ideals and principles
- Educating new members about proper social and personal development
- Involving new members in campus activities and other recognized student organizations
- Participating in intramural events

## Destructive Activities

- Forcing consumption of food or alcohol
- Requiring new members to "line up" or walk in a particular way
- Expecting new members to perform any sort of calisthenics or form of physical training (push-ups, sit-ups, jumping jacks, etc.)
- Forcing new members to wear any type of clothing which is embarrassing or identical in nature
- Expecting new members to use separate entrances to a house or housing facility
- Requiring new members to carry items such as rocks, coins, paddles, books, food, etc.
- Preventing or restricting class attendance or sleep
- Mandating any sort of personal servitude (running errands, cleaning rooms, etc.)
- Forcing strenuous physical activities
- Mandating the application of any sort of substance to new members' bodies
- Marking or branding of new members' physical bodies

Source: Pi Kappa Alpha, Chapter Statement of Position on Hazing: List of Activities

**As a general rule of thumb, if you have to ask if an activity is hazing, it probably is.**





# What does the law say about hazing?



Summary of Section 51.936 *Texas Education Code*

The 74<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature codified a law concerning hazing which became effective May 30, 1995. Under the law, individuals or organizations engaging in hazing could be subject to fines and charged with a criminal offense.

According to the law, 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 by intentionally, knowingly or recklessly allowing hazing to occur; or by failing to report in writing first-hand information that a hazing incident is planned or has occurred to the Vice President for Undergraduate Academic and Student Affairs [or a designated representative].

***The fact that a person consented to or acquiesced in a hazing activity is not a defense to prosecution for hazing under this law*** [emphasis added].

In an effort to encourage reporting of hazing incidents, the law grants immunity from civil or criminal liability to any person who reports a specific hazing incident to the Senior Associate Vice President for Student Affairs [or a designated representative]; and immunizes that person from participation in any judicial proceeding resulting from that report. A person is not protected from prosecution if they report a hazing incident in bad faith or with malice. The penalty for failure to report a hazing offense is considered a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by a fine up to \$1,000, up to 180 days in jail, or both. Penalties for other hazing offenses vary according to the severity of the offense, and ranges from \$500 to \$10,000 in fines and possible confinement.

An organization and/or an officer, or any of its' members, new/associate members, or alumni who commit or assist in incidents of hazing may also be charged with violation of the hazing laws, and may also incur significant financial consequences.

The law defines hazing as an 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 to, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include students at an educational institution.

Hazing includes but is not limited to:

- Any type of physical brutality such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on the body, or similar activity
- Any type of physical activity, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement to a small space, calisthenics, or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health of the student.
- Any activity involving consumption of food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug, or other substance which subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health of the student.
- Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects the student to extreme mental stress, shame or humiliation, or that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from entering or remaining registered in an educational institution, or that may be reasonably be expected to cause a student to leave the organization or the institution rather than submit to acts described in this subsection, or
- Any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task which involves a violation of the *Texas Penal Code*.



***To report an incident of hazing or suspected hazing in a fraternity or sorority, call the Office of Student Activities at (817) 272-2963.***



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- Any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task which involves a violation of the *Texas Penal Code*.

I have received a summary of the Texas Education Code regarding hazing. I agree to abide by this code and to not condone any form of hazing in my organization. Furthermore, I will report any incident of hazing or suspected hazing of which I become aware.

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Signature

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Student ID#

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Date