

my sister  
my responsibility



a program by zeta tau alpha  
preventing and confronting hazing

## Hazing and the Law

*Developed by Judge Mitch Crane,  
Former judge and national speaker on fraternal law and hazing*

### **Learning Objectives:**



1. Increase awareness that hazing has no place and no purpose in the organization
2. To understand the legal ramifications of hazing



### **Technical Requirements:**

Flip chart and markers



### **Handouts:**

What is Hazing? (in the Resources section)

### **Time Needed:**

40 minutes

### **Group Size:**

Any group size is possible

### **Physical Setting:**

The setting for this module is only limited by the size of the group. Be sure you have enough space for people to be comfortable.

### **Room Setup:**

Everyone seated as comfortably as possible and in a U-shape to promote face-to-face discussion.

### **Preparation:**

Look up the university and state hazing policies and add them to the What is Hazing? handout in the Resources section to create a handout that includes all three. Be sure to review these in advance to gain a clear understanding of each and any differences between them.

### **Resources:**

State hazing laws may be obtained through [www.StopHazing.org](http://www.StopHazing.org)

## **INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)**

*The facilitator(s) should introduce himself/herself, welcome and thank everyone for attending the session.*

### **Desired Outcomes**



The information we discuss today will give us a better understanding of the legal ramifications of hazing, so you can see how participating in it in any way can put both you and the organization at risk.

### **In preparation:**

- Look up the university and state hazing policies. Put them on the What is Hazing? handout for participants to keep.
- State hazing policies can be found on [www.stophazing.org](http://www.stophazing.org).
- Do not print/read the entire law – summarize it to create a more clear understanding.

## **Perceptions Can Be Based on Reality (5 minutes)**

So let's start the discussion of how perceptions of fraternities and sororities are intertwined with the law.



- What is the perception of fraternities and sororities? How do people perceive us?
- What are the stereotypical behaviors that people associate with fraternities and sororities?

The average citizens believe that men's fraternities are drunks, hazers and commit sexual assault on women. The women's fraternities are perceived to be elitist snobs. There is a growing perception that the women haze and abuse alcohol, too.

Even though most negative perceptions are of men's fraternities, no campus has eliminated only the men's fraternities – when this happens, the whole Greek community is pulled. From the university perspective, incidents can result in action against the fraternity/sorority system and the banning of future membership.

The violations of law, rules and regulations are most always the cause of failure, and the most frequent violations that bring negative attention are a result of hazing. The outcry comes when supposedly values-based organizations break their own rules, the rules of the institution, and local and state statutes.

## **DEFINING HAZING (5 minutes):**



### **Note to the Facilitator:**

- Distribute What is Hazing? handouts.
- The hazing definitions can be written on the flip chart prior to the program and explained to the group.

Here is a general definition of hazing: An action by an individual or group of persons that involves physical or emotional endangerment to another as a condition of or part of membership in an organization.

Here is our organization's definition of hazing. Hazing is “any action or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off fraternity premises, to produce mental or physical

**Note to the Facilitator:**

- Have the group identify activities that are considered hazing within these definitions, or read the italicized list.

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 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 academic achievement, fraternal law, ritual or policy, or the regulations and policies of the educational institution or applicable state law.”*



- What does that mean in your own words?

*Make sure they understand hazing is not only physical. Review the underlined portion of the definition before you move on.*

Each member is bound by the most severe definition effecting them, including campus regulations and state laws.

**THE LAW (10 minutes)**

Every member of your organization is governed by three types of laws: criminal, civil and administrative. Crimes are violations of the rules of society.

- Does anyone know the penalties for violations of criminal statutes?

They include imprisonment, fines and restrictions on freedom. Hazing is a crime in a majority of states, but even states that do not criminalize hazing, do have criminal statutes against hurting or killing people.

Hazing is explicitly against the law in 44 states.

- A Missouri sorority was closed after forcing new members to drink and injury resulted.
- A California sorority paid millions of dollars in damages after forcing new members to walk into the ocean and two drowned.
- A Florida sorority forced new members to attend a social event where alcohol was served to underage members and one member was sexually assaulted by a male guest. Both the sorority and host fraternity paid a major civil judgment.



**Civil law** deals with violations of a person’s individual rights. The penalty for losing a civil suit can be fines, loss of property, and a lien on everything you own or may own until a judgment is paid. If you are involved in hazing—these things could happen to you!

**Note to the Facilitator:**

- The information about civil law, corporate death and administrative law can be summarized on a flip chart, prepared prior to the session.

The most extreme penalty against an organization is “**corporate death**”—the loss of name, charter, property, even the right to exist. These things could happen to our chapter or the national organization!

**Administrative law** deals with rules within an organization such as the rules of a university or of a social fraternity. The penalties for violating these rules include restrictions on membership rights, sanctions and loss of the right to exist.

### **HAZING AND OUR ORGANIZATION (10 minutes)**

Now that we’ve heard some examples from other places, let’s bring this topic closer to home. Let’s talk about the individuals that founded our organization.



- What qualities did the founders possess?
- Why do you think they chose to start the organization?

They did not have to start their own fraternity at Longwood College; there were two other sororities formed, and another group developing as we were. They went on their own because they were already friends and wanted something different.



- How do you think they survived in those early years?
- How do you think the women managed to select new members and grow into a national organization without hazing?
- What principles did those founders establish and what is the purpose of your fraternity?
- In our principles and purposes, do you find any words or phrases that would give you the right to humiliate and hurt someone who merely wants to be a member?
- How would all sororities and fraternities look differently today if they focused on friendship building rather than intimidation or harm?

### **SUMMATION (5 minutes)**

You know the perceptions non-members have of Greeks. Realize that a non-Greek reading of a tragedy does not memorize the name of the organization and does not know the difference between Zeta Tau Alpha and Zeta Phi Alpha.

Hazing does not build good sisters or life-long friends; it contradicts why we were founded.



- How important is the fraternity to your life?
- Isn’t it the obligation of every member to root out hazing where it exists and to prevent it from existing where it does not exist?
- How do you live your obligation for the fraternity?

If you have lingering questions, want further information about hazing, need to talk about something happening in the chapter or on campus;

1. Contact our new member advisor, general advisor or Province President.
2. You can call International Office at 317-872-0540 if you are not comfortable discussing the issue with women who work with your chapter.
3. If you are uncomfortable speaking to a ZTA about the activity, you may call the Greek Hazing Hotline at 1-888-NOT-HAZE (888-668-4293).