

HAZING AND THE LAW

Preventing and Confronting Hazing; My Sister, My Responsibility®

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

TIME | 40 minutes

Objectives:

- Increase awareness that hazing has no place and no purpose in the organization.
- Understand the legal ramifications of hazing.

Group size:

- Any group size is suitable for this workshop.

Setup:

- Choose a room that allows everyone to sit as comfortably as possible in a U-shape to promote face-to-face discussion.
- 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.

Preparation:

- Look up the university and state hazing policies and add them to the PowerPoint.
- Find state hazing policies at www.stophazing.org.
- Be sure to review these policies in advance to gain a clear understanding of each set and any differences between them.

Materials needed:

- Projector and screen
- PowerPoint
- For each participant: “What is Hazing?” handout

FACILITATOR TIP

- Do not print/read the entire law—summarize it to create a clearer understanding.

The facilitator should introduce him/herself, welcome participants and thank everyone for attending the session.

Share:

- The information we discuss today will give you 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.

PERCEPTIONS CAN BE BASED ON REALITY | 5 minutes

Share:

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

Discuss:

- 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?

Share:

- The average citizens believe that members of 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 also haze and abuse alcohol.
- Even though most negative perceptions are of men's fraternities, no campus has eliminated only the men's fraternities—when serious incidents happen, universities eliminate the whole fraternity/sorority community. On the university level, incidents can result in action against the fraternity/sorority system and the banning of future membership.
- The violations of laws, 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.

Hazing and the Law

Objectives

- Increase awareness that hazing has no place and no purpose in the organization.
- Understand the legal ramifications of hazing.

Perceptions of Fraternities and Sororities

- 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 citizen believes that members of men's fraternities are drunks, hazers, and commit sexual assault on women. People perceive members of women's fraternities to be elitist snobs, and there is a growing perception that women also haze and abuse alcohol.

DEFINING HAZING | 5 minutes

FACILITATOR TIP

- Distribute “What is Hazing?” handouts.
- The hazing definitions are included in the PowerPoint.

Share:

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

FACILITATOR TIP

Have the group identify activities that are considered hazing within these definitions or read the italicized list in the paragraph below.

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 discomfort, embarrassment, harassment or ridicule.**

Ask:

- What does that mean in your own words?

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

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

THE LAW | 10 minutes

Share:

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

Defining Hazing

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

PROHIBITION AND CONSENTING HAZING

ZETA TAU ALPHA: MY DUTY, MY RESPONSIBILITY



ZTA’s Definition of Hazing

No chapter (new or installed) or member (collegiate or alumni) shall conduct, participate in or condone hazing activities. Permission or approval by a person being hazed is not a defense. Hazing activities are defined as: “Any action taken or situation created either intentionally or unintentionally, whether on or off Fraternity premises, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment or ridicule.”

Zeta Tau Alpha does not condone any form of hazing by any member, new member or alumni member. Such activities conflict with the Fraternity’s ideals and traditions and project a negative image of the organization. ZTA collegiate chapters must develop new member programs that reflect the true meaning and high standards of sisterhood. These programs must not demean, embarrass or endanger members or new members.

Scavenger Hunts: No chapter may coordinate or participate in a scavenger hunt or similar activity (i.e., treasure hunt, photo quest, etc.). If a chapter’s host institution or a university organization sponsors a scavenger hunt as part of a recognized program, the chapter must contact the Vice President Collegiate or Extension Director through International Office to discuss a possible policy waiver.

PROHIBITION AND CONSENTING HAZING

ZETA TAU ALPHA: MY DUTY, MY RESPONSIBILITY



What does this mean?

What does ZTA’s definition mean in your own words?

PROHIBITION AND CONSENTING HAZING

ZETA TAU ALPHA: MY DUTY, MY RESPONSIBILITY



Ask:

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

Share:

- 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 have criminal statutes against hurting or killing people.
- Hazing is explicitly against the law in 44 states.
 - » A Missouri sorority was closed after injury resulted from forcing new members to drink.
 - » 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 for a major civil judgment.

FACILITATOR TIP

- *Information about civil law, corporate death and administrative law can be summarized on a flip chart prior to the workshop.*

- **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 penalties could affect you!

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

- **Administrative law** deals with rules within an organization, such as a university or a 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

Share:

- 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.

Discuss:

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

The Law

- Every member of your organization is governed by three types of laws:
 - Criminal
 - Civil
 - Administrative

The Law

- Does anyone know the penalties for violations of criminal statutes?
 - Imprisonment
 - Fines
 - Restrictions on freedom

Hazing is a crime in a majority of states, but even states that do not criminalize hazing have criminal statutes against hurting or killing people.

Hazing is Explicitly Against the Law in 44 States

- A Missouri sorority was closed after injury resulted from forcing new members to drink.
- 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.

The Law

- **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 penalties could affect you!
- The most extreme penalty against an organization is "**corporate death**"—the loss of name, charter, property and even the right to exist. These things could happen to your chapter or the national organization!

The Law continued..

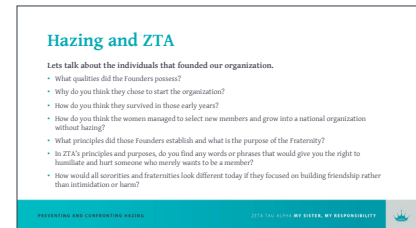
- **Administrative law** deals with rules within an organization such as the rules of a university or a fraternity. The penalties for violating these rules include restrictions on membership rights, sanctions and loss of the right to exist.

Share:

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

Discuss:

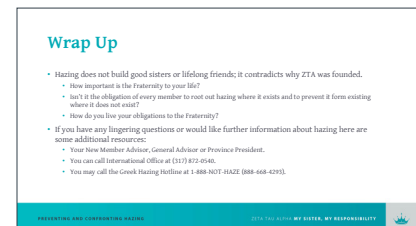
- How do you think they survived in those early years?
- How do you think the women managed to select new members and grow into a national organization without hazing?
- What principles did the Founders establish and what is the purpose of the Fraternity?
- In ZTA's principles and purposes, do you find 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 different today if they focused on building friendship rather than intimidation or harm?



WRAP UP | 5 minutes

Share:

- You know the perceptions non-members have of fraternity/sorority life. Realize that a non-fraternity/sorority life individual 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 lifelong friends; it contradicts why ZTA was founded.



Discuss:

- 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 obligations to the Fraternity?

Share:

- If you have lingering questions, want further information about hazing or need to talk about something happening in the chapter or on campus:
 1. Contact your New Member Advisor, General Advisor or Collegiate National Officer.
 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 Zeta about the activity, you may call the Greek Hazing Hotline at 1-888-NOT-HAZE (888-668-4293).

WHAT IS HAZING?

ZTA HAZING POLICY

No chapter (new or installed) or member (collegian or alumna) shall conduct, participate in or condone hazing activities. Permission or approval by a person being hazed is not a defense. Hazing activities are defined as: “Any action taken or situation created either intentionally or unintentionally, whether on or off fraternity premises, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment or ridicule.”

Zeta Tau Alpha does not condone any form of hazing by any member, new member or alumnae member. Such activities conflict with the Fraternity’s ideals and traditions and project a negative image of the organization. ZTA collegiate chapters must develop new member programs that reflect the true meaning and high standards of sisterhood. These programs must not demean, embarrass or endanger members or new members.

Scavenger Hunts: No chapter may coordinate or participate in a scavenger hunt or similar activity (i.e., treasure hunt, photo quest, etc.). If a chapter’s host institution or a university organization sponsors a scavenger hunt as part of a recognized program, the chapter must contact the Vice President Collegiate or Extension Director through International Office to discuss a possible policy waiver.

STATE HAZING POLICY

(Find each state’s policy on www.stophazing.org.)

UNIVERSITY HAZING POLICY

(Search your university website or ask your fraternity/sorority advisor what your university’s policy states.)

WHO CAN YOU TALK TO?

If you have lingering questions after a *My Sister, My Responsibility* workshop, want further information about hazing or need to talk about something happening in your chapter or on your campus:

1. Contact your New Member Advisor, General Advisor or Collegiate National Officer.
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 Zeta about the activity, you may call the Greek Hazing Hotline at 1-888-NOT-HAZE (888-668-4293).

