

Hazing Prevention:
Fraternity-Sorority Life
& Office of Student Activities

Farmingdale
State College
State University of New York

OFFICE OF
STUDENT
ACTIVITIES



STATEMENT OF POSITION

Farmingdale State College's policy on hazing is housed within its Student Code of Conduct, the controlling document for all campus judicial matters. No policy can be so precisely written as to address all possible situations. When this policy does not address a specific behavior, students, organizations, teams, and groups are expected to conduct themselves and their activities in the spirit of this policy and with respect for the dignity and well-being of others. The definition of hazing applies whether or not the participants consent to such activity or perceive the behavior as voluntary. The determination of whether a particular activity constitutes hazing will depend upon the circumstances and context in which the activity is occurring. As a guiding principle, any activity required of new members that is not required of more senior members is likely to constitute hazing under this policy.

Any activities that may be construed as hazing are specifically and unequivocally prohibited. Per the Farmingdale State College Code of Conduct Hazing is defined as:

Any action taken, or situation created, involving prospective or new members of a group, or as a condition of continued membership in a group (fraternity, sorority, team, club, or other association or organization), that would be perceived by a reasonable person as likely to produce mental or physical harm, extreme or unusual stress, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule.

It further defines hazing as:

Any activity expected of someone that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or which endangers the mental, emotional, physical health, or safety of a student, or which destroys or removes public or private property, for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in an organization or team whose members are or include students at FSC is prohibited. Hazing may occur regardless of the person's willingness to participate. (Note: A person commits a hazing offense if the person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another engaging in hazing; or intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly permits hazing to occur.)

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT OFF CAMPUS AUTHORITY

Per the Farmingdale State College code of conduct Section I Article 3:

Alleged off campus violations, may also be pursued in cases that endanger the personal health, safety or property of members of the College community or personal safety of others. Action may be taken in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The Dean of Students will determine whether student conduct action is warranted under these circumstances. The following criteria include, but are not limited to, sample parameters which shall be utilized to assess off-campus conduct:

- a. The incident involves endangering behavior (defined as violent assault, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment, stalking, arson, distribution of illegal drugs or other serious offenses that constitute a threat to the personal safety of others); and/or*
- b. There has been significant loss of, or damage to, property; and/or*
- c. Alcoholic beverages are sold or made available to underage persons; and/or*
- d. The incident involves hazing (as defined in Section I)***
- e. Violations of local, state, or federal law that may adversely affect the campus and the surrounding Farmingdale community.*

The Student Code of Conduct can be found here:

<https://www.farmingdale.edu/dean/pdf/fscstudentcodeofconduct20182019.pdf>

REPORTING A HAZING INCIDENT

A hazing incident may be reported by anyone: the person who the activity directly affected; a person who assisted in the implementation of the activity; students or college personnel who witnessed the activity; family members or friends who have knowledge of the activity; or community members who witnessed the activity. Students and employees are mandated to report known or reported hazing incidents to University Police as soon as possible.

If you believe you are being hazed or if you have witnessed what you believe is an act of hazing, you should take the following steps:

1. Immediately write down a description of the activity, including dates, times, the names of people and organizations involved, the location the incident occurred, and any other circumstances in which the incident has occurred to help you remember the details (e.g. individuals were wearing a specific color or type of clothing).
2. Then:
 - a. Report the incident to the Student Concerns portal reporting feature which can be found on the MyFSC web page. If you use the Portal and choose to make an anonymous report, please be specific and leave as much detail as possible.

- b. Report the incident to University Police or in person at the University Police department located on campus, or via email police@farmingdale.edu and/or by phone 934-420-2111

COLLEGE ACTION

If an individual or an organization has committed a hazing offense in violation of the Student Conduct Manual, a referral will be forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students. The procedure is referenced in the Student Conduct Manual in “Section IV- Student Code of Conduct Procedures”

It will also be brought to the attention of the organization and its professional representatives associated with the Chapter. (Chapter Advisors, Alumni Advisors, and Professional Staff at the International Headquarters level.)

If an individual or organization accepts responsibility for the activity or is found to be responsible through a hearing, the party or parties involved will receive sanctions from the college. The range of sanctions may be found in the appropriate conduct manual.

POSSIBLE CIVIL AND CRIMINAL IMPLICATIONS

Many successful lawsuits have been filed in the United States court system against organizations and individuals for activities and actions that resulted in mental or physical harm to a member or members.

Members of an organization must realize that charges of hazing may be filed not only against the organization, but against the president, the advisor, individuals associated with the incident, the national affiliate if there is such, as well as the college.

The leadership of each organization must be aware that the burden of liability legally rests with them. Organization officers and team captains run the risk of legal action if all organizational activities and actions are not carefully monitored, and if they do not halt activities that the college, the inter/national organization and the law have construed as hazing.

New York State has specific civil and criminal laws that prohibit hazing.

§ 120.16 Hazing in the first degree. (Class A Misdemeanor)

A person is guilty of hazing in the first degree when, in the course of another person’s initiation into or affiliation with any organization, he intentionally or recklessly engages in conduct including, but not limited to, making physical contact with or requiring physical activity of such other person, which creates a substantial risk of physical injury to such other person or a third person and thereby causes injury.

§ 120.17 Hazing in the second degree. (Violation)

A person is guilty of hazing in the second degree when, in the course of another person’s initiation or affiliation with any organization, he intentionally or recklessly engages in conduct including, but not

limited to, making physical contact with or requiring physical activity of such other person, which creates a substantial risk of physical injury to such other person or a third person.

EXAMPLES OF HAZING

The Farmingdale Student Code of Conduct states:

No policy can be so precisely written as to address all possible situations. When this policy does not address a specific behavior, students, organizations, teams, and groups are expected to conduct themselves and their activities in the spirit of this policy and with respect for the dignity and well-being of others. The definition of hazing applies whether or not the participants consent to such activity or perceive the behavior as voluntary. The determination of whether a particular activity constitutes hazing will depend upon the circumstances and context in which the activity is occurring. As a guiding principle, any activity required of new members that is not required of more senior members is likely to constitute hazing under this policy.

Depending on the circumstances, these activities have been construed as hazing by the courts, inter/national organizations, NCAA and/or institutions of higher education.

Such actions are **required or implied** as conditions for inclusion in or exclusion from the group. They may be perpetuated by an individual or a group. Willingness of the victim to participate does not absolve individuals or organizations of culpability.

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of what could/would be considered hazing. It is simply to be used to demonstrate examples.

Physical

- Sit-ups, push-ups, runs or any form of physical exercise required only of a specific classification of student (e.g. first year students, new members, interested members, etc.)
- Any action which could be perceived as inflicting physical abuse/harm to an individual (e.g. paddling, punching/hitting/slapping, application of foreign substances to the body, burning, blowing smoke in eyes, induced vomiting, denial of food or water, etc.)
- Forcing, requiring or endorsing consumption of alcoholic beverages or any other drug.
- Forcing, requiring or endorsing the ingestion of any substance (e.g. water, condiments, spoiled food, noxious fluids, etc.)
- Tattooing or branding.

Mental

- Verbal harassment including yelling or screaming at potential members, including line-ups.
- Psychological harassment or intimidation in any form.
- Deception and/or threats contrived to convince the new member he or she won't be able to join the organization.
- Threats to life and limb for attempting to report hazing or any crime or for consideration being given to disaffiliating from the group.

Humiliation/De-Humanization

- Carrying items (e.g. rocks, shields, musical instruments, etc.)
- Personal servitude (e.g. running errands, cleaning apartments/houses, doing laundry, etc.)
- Morally degrading and humiliating activities (e.g. requiring members to wade in the lake/river, to count bricks, act like animals, scrub floors with toothbrushes, to be nude, etc.)
- Individual interrogations not consistent with legitimate testing for information (e.g. line ups).
- Wearing apparel that is conspicuous and/or not normally considered in good taste.
- Wearing clothing or jewelry of any type that separate the new members from the general membership. (Note: The wearing of uniforms, gear or membership badges by new members only is prohibited. New members may wear these items as long as all members of the organization are also wearing them simultaneously.)
- Head shaving or uniform haircuts/styles of new members/first year students.
- Walking, running, marching, etc. in formation or in line required only of a specific classification of student (e.g. first year students, new members, interested members, etc.)
- Greeting others with specific greetings, chants, riddles, songs or rhymes.
- Expecting participation in any activity in which the full membership/team does not participate.
- Entering a house or building through a side door or entrance not normally used to enter.
- Reciting phrases or greetings or yelling when entering or leaving a house or building.
- Work parties without the participation of the full organizational membership.
- Withholding basic human rights from members (e.g. ability to speak/communicate normally, drive, sleep, use a cell phone, study, bathe, choose what to eat/drink, etc.)

High Risk Activities

- Scavenger hunts, treasure hunts, road trips or any other such activities when not done for information gathering purposes consistent with educational purposes of the organization. Kidnaps and ditches are specifically prohibited.
- Assigning or endorsing pranks such as borrowing or stealing items, painting property and objects, or harassing other individuals or groups.
- Endangerment. (Any activity where there is the potential for danger, e.g. tying legs together, blindfolding when not done for legitimate fraternity rituals, exchange of bodily fluids, exposure to the environment, drinking excessive amounts of fluids, requiring groups to meet in non-habitable spaces, etc.)

This list by no means covers all activities and actions that can be and are considered to be hazing. Should you have questions whether a specific action is hazing or desire clarification of any of these items, please contact the Dean of Students Office located in Dewey Hall, Room 118 or call 934-420-2104.

THE HIDDEN HARM OF HAZING

The concept of hidden harm has to do with the fact that we don't know everything about the newest members of our organizations or teams. We don't even know EVERYTHING about our best friends. Someone who has just joined an organization/team could have a hidden background that would make them highly susceptible to serious repercussions if hazed. Hazing can be physically or psychologically harmful to even perfectly healthy individuals, but mix hazing with any one of numerous issues someone may be dealing with (e.g. sexual abuse, mental health issues, addiction, suicidal thoughts, post-traumatic stress, etc.), and the damage can increase exponentially.

From www.hazingprevention.org

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT HAZING

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

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/or organizations.

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 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 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: Consent of the victim can't be used as a defense. 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.

EVERYTHING IS HAZING: IT'S SUCH A GRAY AREA

You have undoubtedly heard someone say, "Everything is hazing. There are so many gray areas." It's actually not difficult to decide if an activity is hazing if you use common sense and ask yourself the following questions:

- 1) Is alcohol involved?*
- 2) Will active/current members of the group refuse to participate with the new members and do exactly what they're being asked to do?*
- 3) Does the activity risk emotional or physical abuse?*
- 4) Is there risk of injury or a question of safety?*
- 5) Is the activity inconsistent with your personal values or those of the organization?*
- 6) Do you have any reservation describing the activity to your family members, to a professor or a University official or national representative?*
- 7) Would you object to the activity being photographed for the school newspaper, filmed by the local TV news crew or posted publicly on social media?*
- 8) Do you intentionally fail to mention the activity when recruiting members to join your organization?*

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," the activity is questionable. If in doubt, call your advisor/coach/national office. If you won't pick up the phone, you have your answer.

Adapted from www.stophazing.org; Sigma Alpha Epsilon's Death By Hazing. 1988; & Will Keim, Ph.D. "The Power of Caring"

PREVENTING HAZING IN AN ORGANIZATION

The following are key components in preventing hazing from occurring:

- Organizations must have strong policies that prohibit hazing. The president, advisor or coach of an organization or team must send a clear message that hazing will not be tolerated.
- There must be training to educate all members or an organization about the crime of hazing and about the types of activities that constitute hazing;
- All members of an organization must know that hazing is illegal, be able to recognize behavior that constitutes hazing, and know how to report it.
- New member education/orientation program outlines should be available for potential members and families to review prior to joining. Each new member/candidate should receive a printed copy of the schedule and expectations prior to the beginning of the membership orientation program.
- If in doubt about whether an activity is appropriate, ask for help.

DON'T BE A BYSTANDER: DO YOUR PART TO PREVENT HAZING

Hazing is everyone's problem. How can you be empowered to stop hazing?

- First, understand what hazing is and be prepared to recognize it.
- Second, take responsibility when you see it occurring or when it happens to you by reporting it immediately.
- Third, make others aware of what hazing is and their responsibility for preventing its occurrence. The most important thing you can do is report it. Don't be a bystander.

ONGOING EFFORTS/PROGRAMMING

In an effort to continue education on the dangers of hazing the Office of Student Activities and the Coordinator of Fraternity-Sorority Life will:

- Meet with Presidents and New Member Educators to review this document each semester. Presidents and New Member Educators will sign to attest that they understand the document and have reviewed it.
- New Member Educators will then review this document with their New Member class and the new members will sign that this has been shared with them.
- Every Fall (which is Farmingdale Greek Life's primary recruitment semester) the Office of Student Activities will invite a guest speaker, whose expertise is on hazing prevention education, to host a keynote and training with the various Greek Organizations on campus.

This publication has been produced by the Office of Student Activities (Coordinator of Fraternity-Sorority Life) in conjunction with the Dean of Students Office.

For a copy of other publications mentioned in this document, please contact the Office of the Dean of Students located in Dewey Hall, Room 118 or by telephone 934-420-2104.