



## Hazing

Gordie Bailey was hazed during his pledgship to a fraternity. His desire to become a part of this group ultimately took his life. Hazing can cause injury, long term emotional harm, or death.

### What is Hazing?

Hazing is any activity expected of someone joining a group (or to maintain full status in a group) that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate.

### Myths & Facts about Hazing

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

Fact: 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 – so fraternities and sororities are not alone. 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 pre-meditated and NOT accidental. Hazing is abusive, degrading and often life-threatening.

Myth #3: As long as there's no harm intended, a little hazing should be O.K.

Fact: Even if there's no harm "intended" safety may still be a factor in traditional hazing activities that are considered to be "all in good fun." Serious accidents and injuries have occurred during scavenger hunts and kidnapping trips as well as during water drinking contests that have resulted in water intoxication and death.

Myth #4: Hazing is an effective way to teach respect and develop discipline.

Fact: 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 the 44 states that have hazing laws, consent of the victim can't be used as a defense in a civil suit. 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 sometimes.

Fact: It's not difficult to decide if an activity is hazing if you use common sense and ask yourself the following questions:

Ask the following questions of each activity to determine whether or not it is hazing.

- Is alcohol involved?
- Will active/current members of the group refuse to do what they are asking the new members to do?
- Does the activity risk emotional or physical abuse?
- Is there risk of injury or a question of safety?
- Would you feel uncomfortable describing the activity to your parents, to a professor or University faculty?
- Would you feel uncomfortable with the activity being photographed for the school newspaper or filmed by the local TV news crew?

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," the activity is most likely hazing.

Adapted from Death By Hazing Sigma Alpha Epsilon. 1988

## **The Cost of Hazing**

- Loss of life
- Criminal records
- Litigation with long term financial implications to entire families
- Extensive emotional scarring to both the victim and the perpetrators