

NEW YORK HAZING LAW

Section 120.16 Hazing in the first degree.

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 which creates a substantial risk of physical injury to such other person or a third person and thereby causes such injury.

Hazing in the first degree is a class A misdemeanor.

Section 120.17 Hazing in the second degree.

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 which creates a substantial risk of physical injury to such other person or a third person.

Hazing in the second degree is a violation.

COLLEGE POLICY

Hazing means any act, explicit or implicit, committed by a person, whether individually or in concert with others, against a student in connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization or team and which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of, humiliating, intimidating or demeaning the student or endangering the mental or physical health of the student, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. Hazing also includes soliciting, directing, aiding, or otherwise participating actively or passively in the above acts.

(Approved by College Council Feb. 17, 2012)

Geneseo's Student Code of Conduct states that all members of the College community are required to abide by the statutory Rules of Public Order (Section 6450) of the New York State Education Law which specifically states:

No person, either singly or in concert with others shall...

Take any action, create, or participate in the creation of any situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers mental or physical health or which involves the forced consumption of liquor or drugs for the purpose of initiation into or affiliation with any organization.

EXAMPLES OF HAZING

These activities have at one time or another been construed as hazing by the courts and/or institutions of higher education:

- requiring any form of physically demanding activity (e.g. calisthenics, sit-ups, push-ups, or runs);
- forcing, requiring, or endorsing consumption of alcoholic beverages or other drugs;
- requiring the consumption of undesirable substances (e.g. spoiled food, unusual food combinations, and noxious fluids);
- verbal harassment including yelling or screaming at individuals, line ups, or camp outs;
- requiring or compelling individuals to wear or carry unusual, uncomfortable, degrading, or physically burdensome articles or apparel, or uniforms;
- requiring any type of personal servitude or submissiveness such as running errands, cleaning apartments or houses, doing laundry, etc.;
- 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 "drop-offs" are not permitted;
- assigning or endorsing pranks such as borrowing or stealing items, painting others' property or objects, chapter raids, or harassing other groups;
- endangerment, any activity where there is a potential for danger (e.g. tying of arms and legs, blindfolding, exchange of body fluids, exposing individuals to uncomfortable or dangerous environments, etc.);
- requiring individuals to walk or march in formation or in line;
- requiring individuals to be tattooed or branded;
- requiring individuals to address members with specific greetings, chants, riddles, songs, or rhymes;
- conducting activities that do not allow adequate time for study.

Remember: to stop hazing, we must begin with education and strong leaders who care about the future of their organizations!

STAND UP and STOP HAZING

RESOURCES

geneseo.edu/greek/hazing

hazingprevention.org

**Anti-Hazing hotline:
(888) NOT-HAZE**

HAZING MYTHS

Myth: *Individuals want to be hazed.*

Reality: Occasionally there are individuals who say they want to be hazed. But generally people do not want to be humiliated, intimidated, or physically abused. “Wanting” to be hazed usually means desiring an intense, challenging experience. It is not necessary to haze new members in order to challenge them.

Myth: *Hazing only “a little bit” is not really that bad.*

Reality: While there are more and less severe forms of hazing, even low level hazing crosses the line. Even a “little” hazing can have an unintended negative impact on individuals. And if the action meets the definition of hazing, the group will have violated College policy and NY State law.

Myth: *Hazing builds unity among new members.*

Reality: Hazing may create unity among new members, but often there are costs as well. The effect of hazing on a group can be like the effect of a hurricane on a community: residents feel closer to each other afterward but some may be suffering. Would anyone suggest that it is good for a community to be hit by a hurricane?

Myth: *If someone agrees to participate in an activity, it can't be considered hazing.*

Reality: In states that have laws against hazing, 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 because of peer pressure, intentional or unintentional threats, and the withholding of information about what will occur.

Myth: *Since alumni and current members were hazed it is only fair that the new members go through it too.*

Reality: “Tradition” does not justify subjecting new members to abuse. Traditions are created by groups, and groups hold the power to change or eliminate them. It only takes one year to break a hazing tradition. Remember that the founding members of organizations were not hazed.

Myth: *Hazing only exists in fraternities and sororities.*

Reality: Hazing incidents have occurred across the country in athletic teams, military units, performing arts groups, religious groups, and other types of clubs and organizations. Hazing occurs in high schools as well as on college campuses.

STAND UP!
Take Action

MOVING FROM BYSTANDER TO CHANGE AGENT

1. Notice that something is happening

Before an individual is able to act, he/she must understand what hazing is, identify it, and take notice when hazing is actually happening.

2. Interpret the event as an emergency

Once the individual identifies the activity/behaviors as hazing, he/she must recognize the harmful potential of the situation.

3. Take responsibility for providing help

Once the activity/behavior is noticed and is understood as a problem, the individual must feel a sense of responsibility to take action against the behavior/activity. This student is moving toward taking responsibility.

4. Know how to help

Feeling a responsibility should lead to action. An individual needs to acquire the necessary tools and knowledge to know how to intervene appropriately.

5. Take action to help

In order for the individual to act, he/she needs to have the courage to take the necessary steps to eliminate the barriers described above, completing the cycle.

“...the time and energy drained away in the process of hazing, and in the process of dealing with its aftermath, is collective time and energy that could otherwise be put toward something positive, like helping to solve the complex and pressing problems facing humankind.”

– Elizabeth J. Allan, Ph.D.

HIDDEN HARM OF HAZING

What We DON'T Know Can Hurt Us Most

The concept of *hidden harm* has to do with the fact that we don't know everything about the newest members of our organizations. We don't even know EVERYTHING about our best friends. Someone who has just joined an organization or 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 individuals may be dealing with, and the damage can increase exponentially.

What kinds of things are we talking about with hazing?

Consider the “baggage” that today's students can bring with them to high school or college. Have you dealt with or do you know anyone who:

- Suffers from depression or another mental health issue?
- Has served in the military - been in a war zone?
- Been sexually assaulted?
- Comes from an alcoholic family?
- Has suffered the loss of a friend or family member?
- Has had an alcohol or other addiction?
- Has attempted or seriously considered suicide?
- Is on medication or has been in counseling for a mental health disorder?
- Has been abused physically or emotionally?
- Has been hazed or bullied before?

All of the above backgrounds – as well as countless others we can't even imagine, much less know about – could put someone at higher risk of being re-traumatized through hazing.

STILL CONFUSED?

Ask yourself these questions:

- Would I feel comfortable participating in this activity if my parents were watching?
- Would I be proud if the media ran a story about the activity?
- Am I being asked to keep these activities a secret?
- Am I doing anything illegal?
- Does participation violate my values or those of my organization?
- Is it causing emotional distress or stress of any kind to myself or others?
- If someone were injured, would I feel comfortable being investigated by the insurance carrier?
- When I apply for jobs, can I take the onus of having a criminal arrest on my record?

GET ASSISTANCE

At Geneseo we are committed to community. We are NOT bystanders.

If you have witnessed or know about inappropriate activities taking place in your organizations or on/off campus, it is important that you notify one of the following persons or offices:

Immediate Health/Safety Concern

- University Police: (585) 245-5222
- Geneseo Police: 911

Non-emergency

- Athletic Director: (585) 245-5343
- Dean of Students: (585) 245-5706
- Office of Fraternal Life: (585) 245-5968
- Title IX: (585) 245-5023
- University Police: (585) 245-5651 (*non-emergency line*)