Hazing incidents can occur in military organizations, athletic programs, fraternities, sororities, academic, business, civic and social organizations nationwide. As such, it is extremely important to understand what hazing is so that you can take a stand to end it if you see it.

What is hazing?
In simple terms, hazing is any unreasonable expectation or experience an individual is subjected to that causes or is likely to cause them harm. This definition applies regardless of membership level or consent of the victim. Hazing does not only include harm in the physical sense but also to the psychological/emotional, academic, or other dimensions of a person.

Hazing is a betrayal of trust and an exploitation of vulnerability. Victims often seek friendship, personal development, leadership skills, or other benefits advertised by the organization and place themselves in the trusting and vulnerable position that the organization demands in order to “earn” these benefits. Unfortunately, it is in this position where many victims are subjected to harm.

The full University anti-hazing policy can be found in the Student Organization Code of Conduct available online at http://www.sjsu.edu/getinvolved/soal/student_orgs/acquiring/SJSU_Student_Org_Code_of_Conduct.pdf or in the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development, Administration Building, Room 218.

What are some examples of hazing?
While this is not an all-inclusive list, the following are common examples of hazing:
- Verbal abuse
- Humiliation
- Forced callisthenic punishments (pushups, running, etc.)
- Sleep deprivation
- Compulsory servitude
- Forced wear of embarrassing clothing
- Deprivation of social contact
- Coerced consumption of alcohol
- Compulsion to destroy or steal property
- Carrying of objects to create hardship
- Physical abuse, such as hitting or pushing

Why do people haze?
Hazers will cite a number of “reasons” why they haze, including: to build character, to instill responsibility, to teach humility, to foster teamwork, to form a common bond among new members, to prove loyalty, to carry on “tradition,” to test perseverance, and to serve as a rite of passage. The truth of the matter is that such positive values and outcomes are never truly brought about through something as negative as hazing. Victims of hazing often report feeling a distorted or opposite sense of the “lesson” they were being “taught”.

What is the penalty/sanction for hazing?
At San José State University, hazing is a violation of the Student Organization Code of Conduct and other campus policies. Organizations found responsible for hazing may be suspended, derecognized, or face other sanctions. Individuals who participate in acts of hazing are held personally accountable under this policy and are subject to suspension, expulsion, or other sanctions; all of which appear on a student’s transcript. All fraternity and sorority Inter/National organizations also have additional guidelines concerning the sanctioning of chapters that haze, including the loss of the local chapter’s charter.
What do I do if I feel I’m being hazed?

• Take a stand – make up your mind to do something about it
• Refuse to participate in the activity
• Leave if necessary
• Report the activity to the University

Though it may come over time or up front, be subtle or obvious, if you feel you are being hazed it is extremely important to know that you must take a stand and do something about it. Hazing can be a dangerous and damaging experience and this is why seeking a University staff member to help guide you will be an invaluable resource if you suspect something is going on.

How do I report incidents of hazing?

There are a number of ways to report incidents of hazing or suspicious behavior.

To send an anonymous report to the University Police Department investigators any time, email SJSU@tipnow.org or text/call 408.337.2919.

Student Involvement 408.924.5950
Student Conduct 408.924.5985
University Police 408.924.2222
(San José (city) Police 911
(if in immediate danger on/around campus)
San José (city) Police 911
(if in immediate danger off campus)

You may also speak to any SJSU faculty or staff member to help direct you to the correct resource.

Why should I report hazing?

All members of the University community share the responsibility to report hazing regardless of connection with the organization responsible. Apathy in the presence of hazing or acquiescence to being hazed constitute acceptance of hazing and are not neutral acts. In fact, such behavior only perpetuates the problem. Taking a stand and refusing to participate in hazing activities is only the first part; sharing the information with a University official helps protect you and other students and allows the University to properly address the organization responsible, thereby breaking the negative cycle of harm. Like any other problem in life, hazing will never just “work itself out” and should never be pushed on to another person. It is usually this good sense of right and wrong, more than bravery, that helps people to report hazing.

Hazing and the Law

California Penal Code 245.6 states that hazing is a violation that can be considered a misdemeanor or felony depending on severity, and can be punishable by imprisonment, fines, or both. Neither the express or implied consent of a victim of hazing, nor the lack of active participation in a particular hazing incident is a defense for a hazing violation. In addition to criminal proceedings, hazers are also subject to civil lawsuit.

Further resources on hazing

• State of California Penal Code 245.6
• California State University
• San José State University Student Organization Code of Conduct
• San José State University Fraternity and Sorority Management Manual
• North-American Interfraternity Conference
• National Panhellenic Conference
• National Pan-Hellenic Council
• Inter/National Fraternity and Sorority Affiliates

SJSU offers a number of opportunities to all students in an effort to raise the level of awareness regarding hazing. These include guest speakers, workshops, and various other seminars. For fraternities and sororities, hazing is covered at the New Member Experience (mandatory for new members) and the Fraternal Values Summit (mandatory for Presidents and New Member Educators).

Stop by Student Involvement in Clark Hall, Suite 140 to get more information, or to meet with a staff member.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

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