

# Hazing



## Did you know?

- Hazing is a crime under Texas law.
- Hazing means making someone do something that endangers them physically or mentally, as a requirement to join or even affiliate with an organization.
- Involvement in hazing can have school disciplinary consequences, in addition to legal consequences, even if hazing occurs away from school and is not part of a school-sponsored organization.
- Under Texas law, being present while hazing is occurring and not reporting it has the same legal consequences as being actively involved.
- Adults involved in facilitating hazing are as legally responsible as the students.
- Students and adults have been arrested across North Texas for involvement in hazing.
- Dallas and Richardson police will actively investigate reports of hazing involving RISD students.

If you or your child are a victim of hazing, contact the police. If you are approached to be part of a hazing activity, understand that doing so is breaking the law and can result in arrest and a criminal record.

**Be smart with your future.**

## **Hazing Defined:** TEXAS EDUCATION CODE- EDUC § 37.15

- (1) “Educational institution” includes a public or private high school.
- (2) “Pledge” means any person who has been accepted by, is considering an offer of membership from, or is in the process of qualifying for membership in an organization.
- (3) “Pledging” means any action or activity related to becoming a member of an organization.
- (4) “Student” means any person who:
  - (A) is registered in or in attendance at an educational institution;
  - (B) has been accepted for admission at the educational institution where the hazing incident occurs; or
  - (C) intends to attend an educational institution during any of its regular sessions after a period of scheduled vacation.
- (5) “Organization” means a fraternity, sorority, association, corporation, order, society, corps, club, or service, social, or similar group, whose members are primarily students.
- (6) “Hazing” means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization.**

## **What types of actions constitute Hazing?**

- (A) any type of physical brutality, such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on the body, or similar activity;
- (B) any type of physical activity, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, calisthenics, or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;
- (C) any activity involving consumption of a food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug, or other substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;

(D) any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects the student to extreme mental stress, shame, or humiliation, that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from entering or remaining registered in an educational institution, or that may reasonably be expected to cause a student to leave the organization or the institution rather than submit to acts described in this subdivision; and

(E) any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that involves a violation of the Penal Code.

## **A person commits an offense if the person:**

- (1) engages in hazing;
- (2) solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in engaging in hazing;
- (3) recklessly permits hazing to occur; or
- (4) **has firsthand knowledge of the planning of a specific hazing incident involving a student in an educational institution, or has firsthand knowledge that a specific hazing incident has occurred, and knowingly fails to report that knowledge in writing to the dean of students or other appropriate official of the institution.**

## **NOTES/NEXT STEPS:**