

Instructional Course on Hazing

Official Policies on Hazing 2026 -2027

Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter

Holy Royal Arch Masons of Florida & U.S. Virgin Islands, Inc.

Prince Hall Affiliated





What is hazing?

Definition of Hazing:

The National Federation defines hazing as any humiliating or dangerous activity expected of any individual to belong to a group, regardless of their willingness to participate.

Some practices associated with hazing carry the potential for serious bodily harm or even death. These practices may include: tattooing, piercing, head-shaving, branding, sleep deprivation, physical punishment (paddling and "red-bellying"), "kidnapping", consuming unreasonable/unacceptable foods or beverages, being deprived of personal hygiene and/or inappropriate sexual behavior.

Coerced sexual activity, in addition to being classified as sexual assault and/or rape, is another form of hazing. Such activity puts victims at risk for injuries, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy.

Alcohol abuse is another significant factor in hazing incidents that feature forced consumption of large amounts of alcohol.



What is hazing?

Policy Statement

Hazing is strictly prohibited in all Masonic lodges , Chapters and affiliated activities. Any act that humiliates, endangers, or coerces a member.

Regardless of their willingness to participate is incompatible with Masonic values this applies to all degrees and ceremonies & covers physical, psychological and emotional harm.



What is hazing?

What constitutes Hazing?

- Examples of Hazing Include:

Physical Abuse: Paddling, branding, etc.

Forced Consumption: Alcohol or other substances.

Deprivation/Isolation: Sleep deprivation or forced isolation.

Sexual Coercion: Coerced sexual behavior.

Psychological Harm: Humiliation or ridicule.

Threats, intimidation, or unexpected financial burden beyond the provided fee structure.



What is hazing?

The Masonic Code: Upholding Our Principles

Brotherly Love

Hazing replaces genuine fraternity with fear and intimidation.

Relief

Our membership is predicated on a foundation of safety, support, and mutual care. Hazing shatters this trust.

Truth

Upholding integrity demands absolute transparency and accountability from all members.

Hazing Policy: Enforcement and Reporting

We maintain a Zero Tolerance policy toward hazing. Violations will result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Reporting Channels for Hazing:

To ensure prompt action, members are urged to report any hazing activities through the following channels:

Chapter Leadership

District Deputy Grand High Priest / Assistant District Deputy Grand High Priest

Zone Administrator

The confidential Hazing discovery form available on the Grand Chapter website

Whistleblower Protection: Absolutely no retaliation will be tolerated against any member who reports hazing activities in good faith.



What is hazing?

Psychological Factors:

- Power and Control: Senior members may use hazing to assert dominance or feel empowered.
- Rite of Passage Mentality: Some believe enduring hardship earns respect or proves loyalty.
- Cognitive Dissonance: Victims often justify hazing after the fact to reconcile the pain with perceived reward of belonging.

Social Dynamics:

- Group Cohesion: Ironically, hazing is sometimes seen as a bonding tool, even though it often causes trauma.
- Desire for Belonging: The powerful human need for affiliation makes pledges willing to endure significant harm to be accepted by the group.
- Tradition and Legacy: “We went through it, so you should too”
- Fear of Exclusion: New members may comply with hazing to avoid rejection or ridicule.



What is hazing?

Cultural and Institutional Factors:

Lack of Oversight

In some organizations, hazing thrives due to weak enforcement, lack of understanding or unclear policies.

Normalization

In environments like fraternities, sports, team, or even workplaces, hazing can be seen as “just how things are”

Silence and Secrecy

Victims often don't reporting hazing due to shame, fear of retaliation or loyalty to the group.

Self-Perpetuating Cycle:

Once hazing becomes part of a group's culture, it tends to repeat itself. After enduring and surviving the initiation process, former pledges justify their past suffering by inflicting the same rites on new members, solidifying the cycle.



Florida's Statute on hazing

Key aspects of Florida's Hazing Law

Definition:

Florida law defines hazing as any action that recklessly or intentionally endangers a student's mental or physical health or safety, including forced consumption of substances, physical brutality, or humiliation. Florida's hazing laws also grant immunity to the first person to call 911 for a victim, even if they were involved in the incident.

Examples of Hazing:

This can include:

Violating state or federal law

Acts of physical brutality (e.g., whipping, branding).

Forced consumption of food, liquor, or other substances.

Actions causing extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation or forced exclusion from social contact.

Andrew's Law:

This law strengthened the Chad Meredith Act:

Immunity for Good Samaritans: The first person to call 911 or provide aid to a hazing victim receives legal immunity.

Accountability for Coordinators: Event coordinators can be prosecuted for hazing if it results in injury or death, even if they did not attend the event.

What is Not Considered Hazing

Activities and conduct that further a legal and legitimate objective are not considered hazing.

Customary athletic events or similar contests and competitions are also excluded.



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Hazing Penalties

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Criminal Penalties

- **Misdemeanor Charges:** For non-violent hazing (e.g. humiliation, intimidation), penalties may include fines, probation, community service, or short jail time.
- **Felony Charges:** If hazing results in serious injury, permanent disability, or death, participants may face felony charges such as assault, manslaughter, or kidnapping, which can lead to years in prison.



Civil Liability

- **Victims (or their families)** can file civil lawsuits against individuals, organizations, or institutions involved.
- **Damages** may cover medical expenses, therapy, pain and suffering, and even wrongful death claims.



Hazing Penalties

Individual or Chapter Consequences

- ✦ Expulsion or suspension from the Masonic Order
- ✦ Revocation of a Chapter's charter and all collars withdrawn

Long-Term Personal Impact

Beyond legal and institutional sanctions, hazing can result in:

- ✦ Significant reputational damage
- ✦ Intense public and media and social scrutiny
- ✦ Impairment of future career opportunities
- ✦ Emotional distress and culpability for perpetrators



Grand Chapter Policy on Hazing

• MEGHP Edict

- ❑ No member of the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter, Holy Royal Arch Masons of Florida and its Jurisdictions, P.H.A. shall plan, direct, encourage, aid or engage in hazing.
- ❑ No member of the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter, Holy Royal Arch Masons of Florida and its Jurisdictions, P.H.A. shall permit, condone or tolerate hazing.
- ❑ Apparent permission or consent by a person being hazed does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this edict.
- ❑ A person who engages in an act that violates this edict or state law in order to be initiated into or affiliated with any part or degree pertaining to Holy Royal Arch or Capitular Masonry shall be subject to discipline for that act.
- ❑ This edict applies to hazing behavior that occurs during and after chapter meeting hours.
- ❑ The Grand Chapter will act to investigate all complaints of hazing and will discipline or take appropriate action against any member who is found to have violated this edict.

• Reporting Procedure

- ❑ Any person who believes he is or has been the victim of hazing or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall report the alleged acts immediately to the Excellent High Priest, District Deputy Grand High Priest, Assistant District Deputy Grand High Priest, Zone Administrator, or MEUGC Hazing discovery form.
- ❑ Excellent High Priests, Kings, Scribes as well as other Companions within the Chapter shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances or events that might include hazing. Any such person who receives a report of, observes, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall inform the Excellent High Priest immediately.
- ❑ Submission of a good faith complaint or report of hazing will not affect the complainant or reporter's future status within the Grand Chapter.



Grand Chapter Policy on Hazing

• Grand Chapter Actions

Upon receipt of a complaint or report of hazing, the Grand Chapter shall undertake or authorize an investigation by an Investigations Committee appointed by the MEGHP or a third party designated by the MEGHP.

The Grand Chapter may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant, reporter, Companions involved or others pending completion of an investigation of hazing.

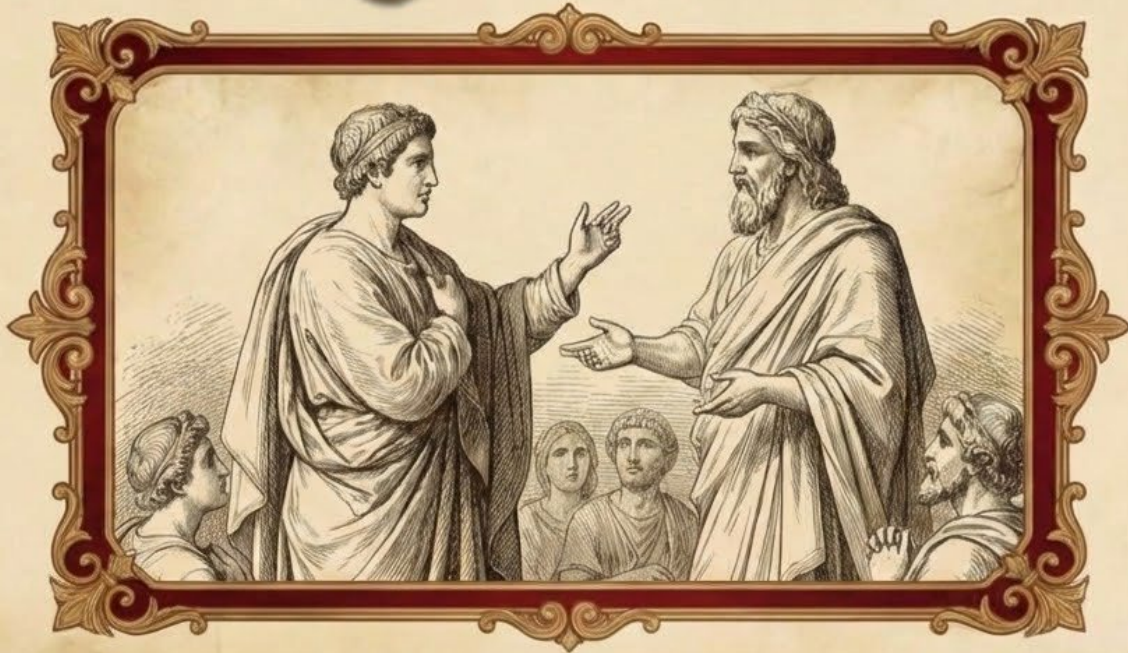
Upon completion of the investigation, the Grand Chapter will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, or remediation. Disciplinary consequences will be administered consistently. The Grand Chapter will appropriately discipline prohibited behavior and deter others from hazing. The Grand Chapter's action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with other policies and applicable portions of the constitution of the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter, Holy Royal Arch Masons of Florida, P.H.A.

• Reprisal

The Grand Chapter will take appropriate action against any member/Companion who retaliates against anyone who makes a good faith report of hazing, or who testifies, assists or participates in an investigation or hearing about a hazing incident. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment.



Q & A



Hazing Course Completion Form



[Acknowledgment](#)

