



Southern Methodist University Statement on Hazing

Hazing is a violation of Texas law and the Southern Methodist University *Student Code of Conduct*. Below is a notification sent twice yearly from the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards regarding hazing. Individuals or organizations engaging in hazing could be subject to fines and charged with a criminal offense as well as face disciplinary action from the University.

Hazing Defined

Texas law [S.B. 38](#) defines hazing as: *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, for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization if the act is:*

- Any type of physical brutality, such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electric shocking, placing of a harmful substance on the body or similar activity;
- Involves sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, calisthenics, or other similar 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;
- Involves consumption of food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug or other substance, other than as described by Paragraph (E), that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or which adversely affects the mental or physical health of the student;
- Is any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that involves a violation of the Penal code; or involves coercing, as defined by Section 1.07, Penal Code, the student consume as drug; or an alcoholic beverage or liquor in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the student is intoxicated, as defined by Section 49.01, Penal Code.

**The fact that a person consented or acquiesced in a hazing activity is not a defense to prosecution for hazing under the law.

Reporting Hazing

According to the law, a person can commit hazing by not only engaging in the activity, but also soliciting, encouraging, directing, aiding or attempting to aid in hazing; and by intentionally,

knowingly, or recklessly allowing hazing to occur. Witnessing hazing or having first-hand knowledge that a hazing incident is planned or has occurred can also be considered hazing, as defined by law.

In an effort to encourage reporting of hazing incidents, the law grants immunity from civil or criminal liability to any person who reports a specific hazing event in good faith and without malice to the Dean or Students or other appropriate University official, such as staff in the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards. A person may also be granted amnesty for any potential liability in university student conduct proceedings. Additionally, a doctor or other medical practitioner who treats a student who may have been subjected to hazing may make a good faith report of the suspected hazing activities to police or other law enforcement officials and is immune from civil or other liability that might otherwise be imposed or incurred as a result of the report. The penalty for the failure to report incidents of hazing is a fine of up to \$1,000, up to 180 days in jail, or both. Penalties for other hazing offense vary according to the severity of the injury which results and include fines from \$500 to \$10,000 and/or up to two years of jail time.

Students who have knowledge of hazing activity can report it to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards by clicking [here](#) or to the Southern Methodist University Police Department or both. Information about hazing may also be reported anonymously through the SMU Police Department's Silent Witness Program by calling 214-SMU-2TIP or online at <http://www.smu.edu/2tip>.

University Policy

This law does not affect or in any way limit the right of the university to enforce its own rules against hazing. Hazing is a violation of section IV.B.4. of the *Southern Methodist University Student Code of Conduct* and is subject to potential proceedings in the Conduct Review Process.

Disciplined Organizations

In accordance with Texas Law (*Texas Education Code*, Subchapter F, Chapter 37). Universities have a duty to report to the campus community all organizations that have been disciplined for hazing, on or off campus, during the preceding three years.

- **Alpha Kappa Alpha** (*conduct probation completed Fall 2019*)
 - Date of Incident:** n/a
 - Date Investigation was Initiated:** May 10, 2017
 - General Description of Incident:** Alpha Kappa Alpha allegedly exhibited an environment consisting of abusive treated of members and hazing of new members. Alpha Kappa Alpha was charged with Irresponsible Conduct, Harassment, and Hazing.
 - Resolution:** Found responsible for the following Irresponsible Conduct, Harassment, and Hazing. Sanctions included an Organizational Accountability Agreement and Conduct Probation until Fall 2019.
 - Date Investigation Concluded:** June 9, 2017

- **Beta Theta Pi** (*conduct probation through December 31, 2021*)
Date of Incident(s): February 26 and March 2, 2020
Date Investigation was Initiated: March 10, 2020
General Description of Incident: Beta Theta Pi was potentially hazing new members of their organization by requiring members to send pornographic images to other members of the chapter. It was also reported that new members were required to engage in activities that can be considered servitude. Beta Theta Pi was charged with Hazing, Alcohol, Irresponsible Conduct and Harassment.
Resolution: Beta Theta Pi was found responsible for Hazing, Alcohol, Irresponsible Conduct and Harassment. Sanctions include Conduct Probation through December 31, 2021 and the completion of an Organization Accountability Agreement which outlines several educational programs and requirements.
Date Investigation Concluded: March 12, 2020

- **Kappa Alpha Order** (*chapter suspended through Fall 2021*)
Date of Incident: n/a
Date Investigation was Initiated: September 13, 2017
General Description of Incident: Kappa Alpha Order was potentially hazing new members of their organization involving paddling, servitude, forcing new members to consume alcohol, forcing new members to participate in calisthenics, forcing new members to consume various food items and liquids until vomiting was induced, forcing new members to wear clothing soiled with vomit, sleep deprivation and "underground" membership. Kappa Alpha order was charged with Irresponsible Conduct, Laws & University Policy, Interference, Harassment and Hazing.
Resolution: Kappa Alpha Order was found responsible for Irresponsible Conduct, Laws & University Policy, Interference, Harassment and Hazing. Sanctions include the Suspension of the Organization until Fall 2021.
Date Investigation Concluded: October 4, 2017

- **Pi Kappa Alpha** (*chapter suspended until Fall 2022*)
Date of Incident: February 9, 2018
Date Investigation was Initiated: February 9, 2018
General Description of Incident: Pi Kappa Alpha was potentially hazing new members of their organization involving forced consumption of hot sauce, onions, and other foods. Pi Kappa Alpha was charged with Hazing.
Resolution: Pi Kappa Alpha was found responsible for Hazing. Sanctions include the suspension of the organization until Fall 2022
Date Investigation Concluded: March 26, 2018

- **Sigma Alpha Epsilon** (*deferred suspension through May 2020*)
 - Date of Incident:** n/a
 - Date Investigation was Initiated:** May 2, 2017
 - General Description of Incident:** Sigma Alpha Epsilon was allegedly hazing new members, including servitude and possible physical abuse. Sigma Alpha Epsilon was charged with Alcohol and Hazing.
 - Resolution:** Sigma Alpha Epsilon was found responsible for Hazing. Sanctions included an Alternative Resolution Agreement and Deferred Suspension through May 31, 2020.
 - Date Investigation Concluded:** May 5, 2017

Additional Resources

For a list of additional resources, please see below

- **Office of the Dean of Students**
Dedman Center for Lifetime Sports, Room 110
- **Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards**
Hughes-Trigg Student Center, Suite 205
- **Southern Methodist University Student Code of Conduct:**
<https://smu.edu/StudentAffairs/OfficeoftheDeanofStudents/StudentHandbook>
- **Hazing prevention information**
<http://hazingprevention.org/>
- **To Report Hazing at SMU**
[Hazing Reporting Form](#)