

# RECOGNIZE IT.

## MYTH VS. REALITY

There are numerous myths about hazing that often make it hard to know what is true and what is not true. Many longstanding beliefs about hazing are false and don't stand up to the scrutiny of reality.

### Myth

**Hazing only occurs in Greek organizations.**

**Hazing must be okay if the military does it.**

**Hazing is really just a prank that goes wrong.**

### Reality

According to the national hazing study, *Hazing in View: College Students at Risk*:

- 55 percent of college students involved in clubs, teams, and organizations experience hazing.
- Hazing occurs in, but extends beyond, varsity athletics and Greek-letter organizations and includes behaviors that are abusive, dangerous, and potentially illegal. Alcohol consumption, humiliation, isolation, sleep-deprivation, and sex acts are hazing practices common across various types of student groups. Simply put, hazing is not a GREEK thing— it is a COMMUNITY issue, and it requires a community effort to affect change in hazing behavior.

The U.S. military does not, in fact, condone hazing practices. The military does engage in a unique type of training for dangerous military operations. This training is conducted by professionals to prepare military personnel for putting their lives on the line for their country. According to the Department of the Army's TRADOC Regulation 350-6:

"Hazing is strictly prohibited" and is "an offense punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice."

Accidents can happen during hazing, but hazing is not accidental. It is premeditated abuse that can be emotionally traumatic, physically dangerous, or even life-threatening.

**Enduring hazing is a sign of strength**

While it does take a certain strength to make it through hazing, many people submit to it because they desire acceptance by others, are afraid to resist, or feel a need to prove to themselves or others that they are worthy or tough enough (“a real man,” for example). These motives reflect conformity, fear, and insecurity, which are not qualities typically associated with strength. In contrast, standing up to a group of abusive peers or breaking free from hazing takes courage. That's real strength.

**Because alumni and current members were hazed, it is only fair that the new members go through it too.**

"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.

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

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.

**"If it doesn't kill you, it only makes you stronger Hazing is okay as long as it is not physically dangerous.**

So while it's true that difficult situations can help individuals grow and prepare for life's challenges, many experiences that don't "kill" nevertheless do damage because of their psychological or physical impact.

**Hazing is okay as long as it is not physically dangerous.**

Mental hazing can be brutal and leave lasting psychological scars. Some hazing victims report that the mental hazing they endured was worse than being physically abused.