

HAZING: HOW TO RECOGNIZE, REDUCE AND RESPOND TO HAZING



The following information has been provided by SafeSport, a program of The United States Olympic Committee. SafeSport aims to create a healthy, supportive environment for all participants of sports through education, resources and training. The overall goal is to help members of the sports community recognize, reduce and respond to misconduct in sports. For more information, please visit www.safesport.org.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO PROTECT ATHLETES

Being a team member shouldn't come with additional requirements that get in the way of enjoying sports. Hazing often begins as seemingly benign behavior but can become an issue if allowed to continue. Since hazing often occurs among peers, coaches and staff can send a strong anti-hazing message by creating an environment that encourages individuals to raise concerns or share information. In addition, most states have enacted legislation to discourage hazing and hold those who participate accountable; and these laws can provide additional support for anti-hazing efforts.

DEFINITION

Hazing involves coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for joining a group or being socially accepted by a group's members. It includes any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law. Activities that fit the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of an athlete's willingness to cooperate or participate.

EXCEPTIONS

Hazing does not include group or team activities that are meant to establish normative team behavior or promote team cohesion. Examples include:

- Allowing junior athletes to carry senior athletes' equipment into the locker room after practice.
- Encouraging junior athletes to arrive early and set up training equipment.
- Giving senior athletes first preference in team assignments, responsibilities, accommodations, facilities or equipment.

EXAMPLES OF HAZING

- Requiring, forcing or otherwise requiring the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Tying, taping or otherwise physically restraining an athlete.
- Sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature.
- Sleep deprivation, unnecessary schedule disruption or the withholding of water and/or food.
- Social actions (e.g. grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule.
- Beating, paddling or other forms of physical assault.
- Excessive training requirements that single out individuals on a team.

Courtesy of The United States Olympic Committee.