

HAZING POLICY

Hazing is not permitted at Caltech. Hazing is not only illegal, but it violates the Honor Code, in that it takes unfair advantage of members of our community.

Caltech's hazing policy is distinct from—and broader than—California Penal Code section 245.6, which prohibits "any method of initiation or pre-initiation into a student organization or student body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury to any former, current, or prospective student of any school, community college, college, university or other educational institution in this state." The full text of the code can be found below. *[i]*

At Caltech, hazing involves two distinct components:

- The creation of any situation, consensual or not, that may reasonably place another person in danger of physical or psychological harm, or demonstrates disregard for another person's dignity or well-being.
- AND when participation in—or exposure to—such a situation is an implicit or explicit condition for initiation to, admission into, affiliation with, or continued social or cultural membership in a group or organization.

Please see the attached Guidelines *[ii]* for examples of specific behaviors that could be considered hazing at Caltech, as well as some commonly asked questions about hazing.

In the spirit of the Honor Code, anyone who has knowledge of an event or activity that constitutes hazing has a responsibility to take every reasonable action to prevent its occurrence, and/or to report it in a timely manner. Every effort will be taken to keep the identity of reporting parties confidential.

Reports may be made to any representative of the Undergraduate or Graduate Dean's Office, or the Senior Director of Student Activities. The full contact list can be found below. *[iii]* Failure to do so can result in disciplinary action, as will participation in the hazing itself. Investigations will follow already established practice. See the Honor Code handbook *[iv]* for more details. Sanctions range from a formal warning to expulsion from Caltech.

If someone wishes to discuss a possible hazing incident with a confidential resource, s/he should consult with a staff member from the Counseling Center, or a designated person in the Diversity Center. It is also possible to ask an anonymous question via the Caltech Compliance Hotline *[v]*

Notes

***[i]* California Penal Code Section 245.6**

(a) It shall be unlawful to engage in hazing, as defined in this section.

(b) "Hazing" means any method of initiation or preinitiation into a student organization or student body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury to any former, current, or prospective student of any school, community college, college, university, or other educational institution in this state. The term "hazing" does not include customary athletic events or school-sanctioned events.

(c) A violation of this section that does not result in serious bodily injury is a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of not less than one hundred dollars (\$100), nor more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000), or imprisonment in the county jail for not more than one year, or both.

(d) Any person who personally engages in hazing that results in death or serious bodily injury as defined in paragraph (4) of subdivision (f) of Section 243 of the Penal Code, is guilty of either a misdemeanor or a felony, and shall be punished by imprisonment in county jail not exceeding one year, or by imprisonment pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 1170.

(e) The person against whom the hazing is directed may commence a civil action for injury or damages. The action may be brought against any participants in the hazing, or any organization to which the student is seeking membership whose agents, directors, trustees, managers, or officers authorized, requested, commanded, participated in, or ratified the hazing.

(f) Prosecution under this section shall not prohibit prosecution under any other provision of law.

[ii] Guidelines

Commonly Asked Questions:

Q: Isn't the definition so vague that anything can be considered hazing?

A: Read the definition, and then ask yourself the following questions:

- Does the activity involve humiliation or intimidation?
- Does it involve physical abuse (e.g., sleep deprivation)?
- Could it cause emotional distress or undue stress of any kind?
- Would you have any reservations describing the activity to your parents, the police, or a university official?
- Would you be worried if the activity were shown on the evening news?
- Would the current members refuse to engage in the same activity?

If the answer to any of the above questions is "Yes," the activity is probably hazing.

Q: If someone agrees to participate in an activity, how can it be considered hazing?

A: In states that have laws against hazing—like California—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.

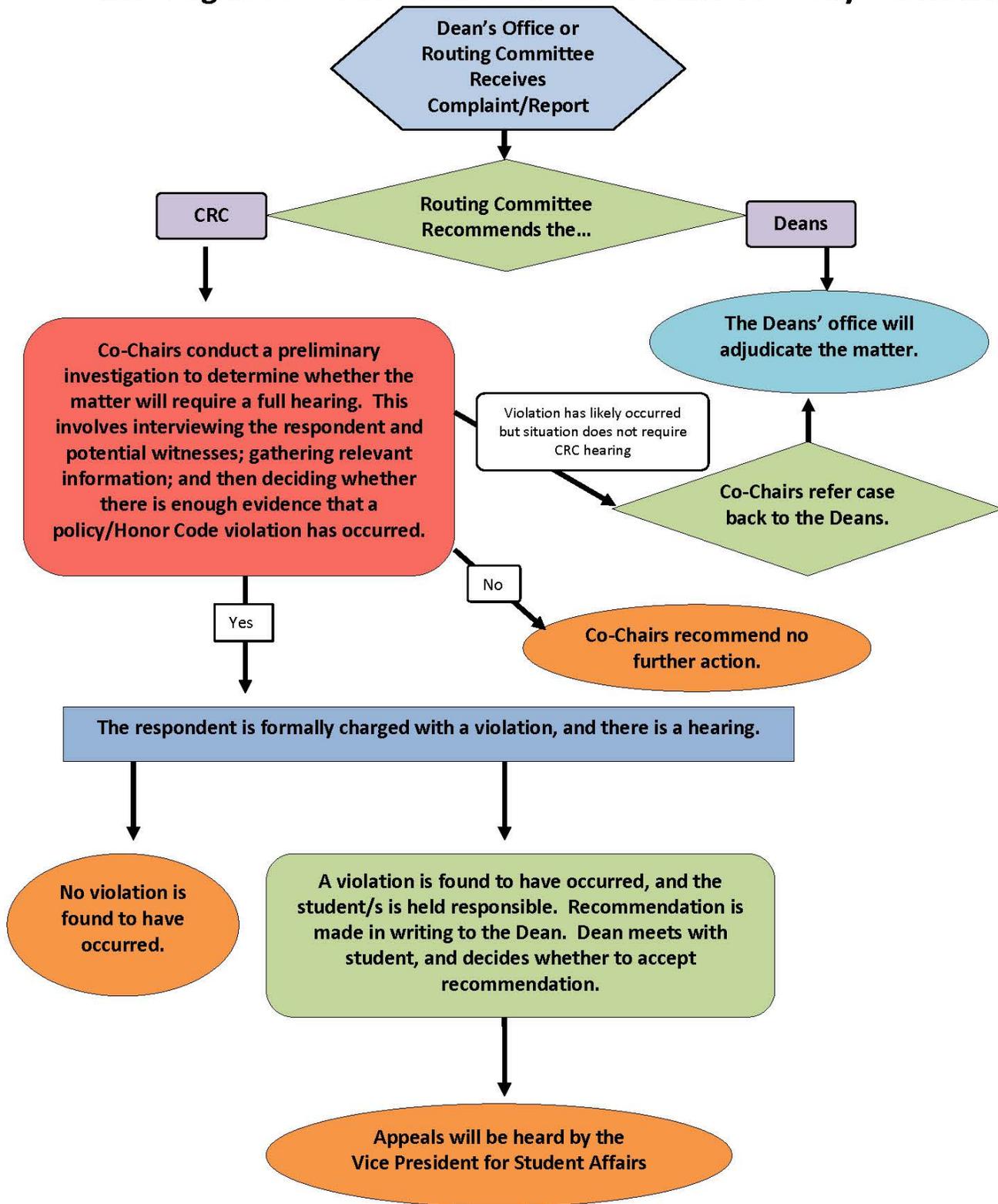
Q: Well, the state law says that hazing is okay as long as it is not physically dangerous.

A: Even the slightest 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. Caltech holds its community members to a higher standard than does the state.

Q: If I am planning an activity, and am unsure whether it could constitute hazing, who should I ask?

A: You should check with your House President, team captain, or other leader of your group. S/he should then run the idea by the IHC or the group's advisor. If there are still questions, you can submit a query to the Dean's office, or speak with a dean, an RLC, or the Senior Director for Student Activities. But if you're still unsure, it is better to err on the safe side, and refrain from the activity.

Flow Diagram for Non-Academic Honor Code or Policy Violations*



*Any case that involves unlawful harassment or sexual violence will be managed according to Institute policy, and will not follow these processes.

Specific Activities:

Welcoming new members to our community is both valuable and necessary. Acceptable circumstances that allow for freshman-focused events include, but are not limited to the following:

- Class-organized events or inter-class competitions
- House-wide voluntary leadership or service positions that include members of the freshmen class
- UCC, RA, AC, or alley-sponsored activities that support the integration of first-year students into the community.
- Events or activities that highlight the Caltech support network or organizational history
- Pranks and/or scavenger hunts that have been approved by the Senior Director of Student Activities, the MOSH, and/or the Deans' office

Activities that could be considered hazing when participation in, or exposure to them is an implicit or explicit condition for initiation to, admission into, affiliation with, or continued social or cultural membership in a group or organization include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Throwing substances or objects at individuals
- Any activity unapproved by the IHC that socially isolates or segregates an individual or group of students
- Verbal, physical or sexual abuse
- Any activity that forces or encourages over-ingestion, or ingestion of any substances, including drugs or alcohol
- Activities that require uncomfortable, vulgar or ridiculous apparel, or total and/or partial nudity
- Showering, ponding or floating of new community members
- Line-ups and drills/tests on meaningless information
- Deliberately interfering with adequate time for study
- Kidnapping and/or intimidation
- Violent or aggressive contests
- Unconstructive physical labor that selectively targets initiates
- Freshmen-specific assignments or tasks
- Expecting or encouraging illegal activity or property damage
- Withholding certain privileges

[iii] List of offices and individuals to whom you can report hazing incidents:

- The [Undergraduate](#) or [Graduate](#) Deans:

[Kevin Gilmartin](#), Dean of Undergraduate Students
[Barbara C. Green](#), Associate Dean of Undergraduate Students
[Lesley Nye](#), Associate Dean of Undergraduate Students
[Doug Rees](#), Dean of Graduate Studies
[Kate McAnulty](#), Associate Dean for Graduate Studies

- [Tom Mannion](#), The Senior Director of Student Activities
- Any Residential Life Coordinator, [Joe Bennethum](#), [Erica Crawford](#), [Vanessa Tejada](#), [Nilza Santana-Castillo](#)
- Any [Residential Associate](#) (This link may only be accessed from a Caltech network computer)

[iv] Honor Code Handbook: <http://deans.caltech.edu/documents/176-hch16.pdf>

[v] Caltech Compliance Hotline: <http://asic.caltech.edu/hotline>