



Mount Holyoke College
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Massachusetts Hazing Law and MHC Hazing Policy

Student organizations must have **all members** sign the MHC Anti-Hazing form and return it to Student Programs within two weeks of registering. At this time, or upon joining an organization, each and every member must also receive a copy of sections 17, 18, and 19 of the Massachusetts State Law 269, Anti-Hazing Forms and multiple copies of the relevant sections of the law are distributed to organizations at the beginning of each academic year and upon request.

Please note that **failure to report** instances of hazing is also an offense under both the MHC policy and MA Law 269:18. See below for the actual text of the MHC Hazing Policy and Massachusetts Law.

Hazing is a serious offense. The College encourages students to report such offenses promptly. Hazing is prohibited by both state law and the Mount Holyoke College Honor Code and will not be tolerated in this community of trust. All reported cases of suspected hazing will be seriously investigated with a fair process.

On November 26, 1985, legislation prohibiting hazing took effect in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Although hazing is most commonly associated with induction into college fraternities and sororities, the practice can also occur in a number of other circumstances.

The legislation states:

The term "hazing"... shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person.

Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, or other substance, or any brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest, or extended isolation.

Go to the following website for the complete text of the Massachusetts Hazing Law and review 269: 17, 18, 19: <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/gl-269-toc.htm>

Some ways to tell if an activity is hazing:

- A selected group is singled out for ritual

- It results in behavior or pictures that you would not share with your parents, coach, professors or athletic director
- The activity is humiliating, demeaning, intimidating, and exhausting, and/or results in physical or emotional discomfort, involves harassment or ridicule, or which endangers the health or safety of any person whether on or off campus.

Remember: what may seem like harmless “fun” to you may be deeply humiliating to another person.

Distribution of Policy:

All students receive a copy of this policy when receiving keys to their residence hall room and sign a statement that they will abide by this policy. (Non-residential students will be mailed a copy of the policy.) All student team captains and organization chairpersons receive copies of the policy from Athletics and Student Programs at the start of the year/their season, and are required to have each member of their group sign a statement that they agree to abide by this policy. Each group member then receives a copy of the policy statement they have signed. See Athletics Handbook (<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/athletics/handbook/index.shtml>) and Student Programs Rules and Tools (http://www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/student-programs/handbook/Chapter1/hazing_files/hazing.shtml) for more information on team and organization anti-hazing statement signatures .

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Where can I make a report and/or receive support if I’ve experienced hazing?

You may report hazing to the appropriate law enforcement individual and/or any of the following offices – click on the office for a link to direction. Reports should include what happened, where it happened, when it happened and who was there.

- [Dean of Students Office](#) (email to lrdavis, x2550)
- [Student Programs](#) (email to jlaprade, x2478)
- [Athletics Department](#) (email to lpriest, x2284)
- [Public Safety](#) (2949)
- [Counseling Services](#) (email to efeney, 2037)
- [Ombuds Office](#) (email to cstewart, x2413, x2863)
- [Diversity and Inclusion](#) (email to ggmoore, x3569)

2. Can I make an anonymous report?

- Yes you can make an anonymous report to any of the resources listed above.

3. If I am the witness of a hazing incident, what responsibility do I have to report it?

Yes, you have an ethical and legal responsibility under the Honor Code and MA law to report any incident of hazing that you witness to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practical.

4. What is the range of outcomes for reported hazing incidents involving Mount Holyoke community members?

Hazing is a serious offense. If it is determined to be a criminal offense, legal outcomes include fines of not more than three thousand dollars or imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both fine and imprisonment.

Even if there is no criminal case:

- The range of outcomes at the College depends on facts of the matter, as determined by the College's investigation of the report.
- The complainant may choose to pursue action against those involved with the hazing (i.e. none, informal grievance, formal grievance, Council on Student Affairs, Student Disciplinary Process through the Dean of Students Office, legal remedies).
- The Dean of Students or other college officials may also take action to enforce College policy or comply with applicable law. The College may take appropriate protective and administrative action even in situations where the Complainant is absent.
- Outcomes may include, but are not limited to: a letter of reprimand, mandatory educational project, social probation, suspension, required withdrawal or expulsion. Team players may be suspended or expelled from the team. Club members may be suspended or expelled from their club. In addition, teams or clubs participating in hazing may lose the right to organize, play, compete for any period of time, including permanently.

5. See the Student Handbook for further information (links) on Mount Holyoke's Grievance Procedures, the Council on Student Affairs Procedures, Standards of Social Conduct, and Myths & Facts About Hazing.

Massachusetts Hazing Law 269 States:

269:17. Hazing Prohibited; Definition; Penalties.

[Text as amended by 1987, 665 effective April 4, 1988. For text effective until April 4, 1988, see 1986 Edition.]

Section 17. Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental

stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

269:18. Failure to Report Hazing; Penalty.

[Text as amended by 1987, 665 effective April 4, 1988. For text effective until April 4, 1988, see 1986 Edition.]

Section 18. Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonable practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

269:19. Notification by Schools of Hazing Law; Report by Schools; Disciplinary Policy.

[Text as amended by 1987, 665 effective April 4, 1988. For text effective until April 4, 1988, see 1986 Edition.]

Section 19. Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such a policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of

regents and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution that fails to make such report.