

Hazing

Lesson Objective:

Lesson Objective: Comprehend the importance of the Civil Air Patrol's hazing policy.

Desired Learning Outcomes:

1. Define hazing in your own words.
2. Explain Civil Air Patrol's hazing policy.
3. Describe CAP's reporting procedures with regard to hazing.
4. Discuss steps commanders should take to prevent hazing in their units.

Lesson:

Overview:

Initiations are rituals or ceremonies in which a new member is admitted into an organization or group (adapted from *The American Heritage Dictionary*). In Civil Air Patrol, some people consider a cadet's first encampment, first search and rescue mission or exercise, or even the first uniform inspection as an initiation into the group, required to be considered "part of the team." These types of activities are usually harmless because they are learning experiences that CAP cadets usually go through, and they can have a specific positive purpose and effect. When these activities are carried out in accordance with the rules, they can be "bridges" new cadets pass over which help them feel a part of the group.

Punishment for inappropriate behavior can also have positive effects, deterring further unacceptable behavior, as well as, reinforcing acceptable behavior. Discipline is the positive use of punishment. Depending on the infraction, punishment can be mild, a gentle nudge to remind the member of what is appropriate. Punishment can also be severe, reflecting on the seriousness of the offense.

Initiations and punishment aren't always beneficial. Many times, initiations which are meant to be harmless rites of passage can in fact be extremely harmful. Hazing is the negative use of punishment. Improper application of punishment can also be detrimental to the members involved, inflicting emotional or physical harm. Blanket parties, GI showers, physical punishment, emotional punishment, and dares, among other activities, can create lasting physical and emotional scars for the cadets involved, and these are the antithesis of the positive, team-building activities that CAP encourages.

In this segment you will examine what hazing is, Civil Air Patrol policy regarding hazing, reporting procedures to assist you if an allegation of hazing arises, and steps you can take in preventing hazing from occurring in your unit.

Hazing Defined:

Basic Definition

What is hazing? Civil Air Patrol defines hazing as, **any conduct whereby someone causes another to suffer or be exposed to any activity that is cruel, abusive, humiliating, oppressive, demeaning, or harmful.**" (CAPR 52-10, CAP Cadet Protection Policy). This definition is necessarily broad, since it's impossible to list all the possible scenarios or examples of hazing.

Hazing Definition:

- "Any conduct whereby someone causes another to suffer or be exposed to any activity that is _____."
- Actual or implied consent does not make it _____.

Difference between Hazing and Discipline

It is important to distinguish between hazing and discipline. Discipline in Civil Air Patrol is very important, from teaching cadets how to act responsibly in their community to ensuring compliance with the regulations that keep members safe in the air and on the ground. Effective, thoughtful use of discipline, tailored to the offense and the member involved, keeps CAP running smoothly.

Always remember: physical punishment is never an acceptable way to correct behavior in CAP. Making a cadet do 100 pushups for coming to the meeting late isn't appropriate. What is appropriate is explaining the rule, that being on time is important, and selecting other action – perhaps having the cadet refrain from testing for a night – to reinforce what you want. Public humiliation is also taboo and incompatible with CAP's philosophy of providing a positive nurturing environment for cadets. Discipline a cadet away from other cadets. Have another member as a witness if necessary, but do not berate or humiliate a cadet in front of others.

Difference between Hazing and Team-building

Team-building builds spirit and morale. It improves the working relationship among members. Hazing is divisive; it creates a break between members and those who are not yet “part of the group.” CAP members should be considered part of the “group” when they join Civil Air Patrol. They should earn their place as part of a ground team, aircrew, drill team, color guard, or other details; they do so by training and competence, not by enduring frat-house games.

To be effective, team-building should be a positive experience aimed at including all who wish to participate. The focus should be on bringing all participants closer together, emphasizing working relationships rather than popularity contests.

Is Hazing Permissible?

Hazing is not permitted under any circumstances even if the victim does not protest. The context of CAP’s definition implies that the standard against which hazing is measured revolves around the effect on the victim, not the intent of the perpetrator. A victim’s actual or implied consent to hazing does not make it permissible because the victim may feel intimidated, or not accepted unless they submit to the hazing. This is extremely important, because it places responsibility on the leadership to ensure that abusive behavior is discouraged and stopped if discovered.

Examples/Non-examples of Hazing

Though it’s impossible to list all the possible scenarios that constitute hazing activities, below are some potential examples and non-examples of hazing activities, when evaluated against CAP’s definition of hazing.

Examples of Hazing:

A. Making a cadet run laps or do pushups for having un-shined shoes.

Physical punishment is not considered appropriate for any mistakes or misconduct.

B. Making new cadets sleep in the rain during a bivouac or depriving them of sleep.

There is no possible benefit derived from depriving cadets of shelter or sleep and may in fact be harmful (causing hypothermia, colds, or other illness). It makes the cadets extremely uncomfortable, unable to perform at their best and contributes to their feeling separate from their peers.

- C. Screaming at a cadet for forgetting to salute a superior officer.**
Screaming is inappropriate because it just doesn't fit the offense. Forgetting to salute did not put the cadet or anyone else in danger. In addition, rarely does anyone hear past the noise to understand the message, and the cadet may feel demeaned or humiliated, especially if they were screamed at in front of their peers. It's simply unprofessional.
- D. Making the newest cadets in each flight of the encampment clean the encampment vehicles during free time.**
There are no positive benefits for the cadets derived from the activity. Moreover, the cadets are being deprived of their free time and singled out for the task because of their status in CAP not because of any reasonable policy.

Non-examples of Hazing:

- A. Suspending a cadet for fighting with another cadet.**
This punishment, while severe, is justified. Fighting among cadets is serious and detrimental to the morale and welfare of the unit. The cadets must learn the consequences of their actions. Depriving them of the privilege of being at the unit for some time may teach them that fighting isn't worth the price they'd pay. Punishing unacceptable behavior in an appropriate way is not hazing.
- B. Having newly promoted cadets recite the cadet oath at the meeting's closing ceremony.**
This is an example of a positive initiation because it welcomes the cadets into their new roles. The cadet oath is a positive statement of the virtues valued in cadets, and the level of ceremony involved is reflective of their achievement.
- C. Having a cadet clean the interior of the squadron van (with the appropriate materials) because they left a pile of trash in it.**
This punishment is acceptable because it directly ties to the offense. By cleaning the van's interior, the cadet will learn the consequences of not attending to their own mess. Requiring that cadet to use a toothbrush or other inappropriate materials to clean the van moves punishment toward hazing.

Now that we have a better understanding of what hazing is, let's now examine Civil Air Patrol's hazing policy.

Civil Air Patrol Hazing Policy:

Simply stated, CAP will not condone or tolerate hazing. Hazing is against each of the core values of the organization. Hazing activities teach CAP cadets poor leadership and management habits and are contrary to CAP directives.

As a functional matter, the Civil Air Patrol treats hazing accusations in the same way as it treats accusations of physical abuse. Specific guidance is provided in CAPR 52-10.

CAP Reporting Procedures:

CAP has put in place comprehensive reporting procedures to ensure that incidents of hazing are promptly reported and investigated. Members who feel they may have been victims of hazing may file a complaint in accordance with CAPR 123-2, *Complaints*. This directive takes the member step by step through the complaints process and lists alternative channels in the event that the member's immediate commander is involved with the allegation. The remaining steps listed below assume that the commander is not the subject of the complaint, and they have been notified or suspect hazing has taken place in their unit.

Unit commanders who learn of a possible incident of hazing within their unit shall immediately notify the wing commander. The wing commander, in turn, will notify the region commander, wing legal officer, and NHQ General Counsel (GC).

The wing commander will consult with the wing legal officer before beginning an investigation.

If physical injury is involved, also follow the reporting procedures outlined in CAPR 62-2, *Mishap Reporting and Investigation*.

Remember that the activities and findings arising from each of these steps should be kept confidential. The rights of both the complainant and the accused must be respected. But if there is any question about whether a member's conduct constitutes hazing, contact the wing legal officer.

Reporting Procedures

- Members who feel they have been hazed should file a complaint IAW _____.
- Unit commanders who learn of or suspect hazing has taken place will notify their _____.
- _____ commanders will consult the wing _____ before starting an investigation.
- If physical injury is involved, also follow the reporting procedures outlined in CAPR _____.

Preventative Measures:

Commanders can take action to prevent hazing and other abusive situations. They are expected to take the following steps to ensure cadet safety. The preventative measures outlined below can also be found in CAPR 52-10, *CAP Cadet Protection Policy*.

- Exercise judgment and discretion when selecting senior members, cadets, and other persons to conduct or supervise cadet activities.
- Encourage members to report any observed or alleged abuse.

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- When cadet abuse is alleged and/or verified, suspend the member from all CAP activities, make immediate notification, and take appropriate personnel actions in accordance with CAP directives.
- Ensure at least two “approved” seniors are present at all overnight cadet activities. Encourage at least two senior members to be present at all cadet activities (with the exception of chaplain counseling or cadet orientation flights). This policy is for the protection of the senior members as well as the cadets. If the cadet is a female, then one of the seniors should also be a female.
- Conduct periodic orientations for senior members to ensure they understand the procedures and policies set forth in the cadet protection regulation.
- Ensure the cadets are informed of the policies set forth in the cadet protection regulation.
- Spot-check signatures on permission slips.
- Provide parents with a calendar of activities and notify parents when a scheduled activity is cancelled, relocated, or changed.
- Give parents an opportunity to personally meet the senior members by periodically designating meetings as “parents night.”
- Mail parents a current roster of members who supervise or conduct cadet activities.

The most basic advice is to promote a climate of true cohesion and esprit; one that’s fostered by the positive performance of the unit, an understanding of the work it’s set out to do, and the positive performance of its members.

Understanding CAP’s hazing policy is vital in ensuring the safety and well-being of your cadets and unit. More than initiation gone awry, hazing can have tragic and long-lasting consequences for the victims and their families. Key to understanding hazing is knowing what constitutes appropriate discipline and team-building, and what constitutes inappropriate punishment or abuse.

(See exercise on the next page)

Exercise:

EXERCISE OBJECTIVE: To enable students to apply what they have learned from the Hazing segment and complete the exercise.

NOTE: In completing the exercise the students will demonstrate the mastery of behavioral objectives which will show comprehension of the objectives.

You are the commander of North Lake Cadet Squadron, and are welcoming your cadets to their first meeting since the wing encampment. Five cadets went to the encampment and all but one, Cadet Spencer – a first-time attendee—seem excited to share their experiences.

As the night progresses, Cadet Spencer becomes more irritable. He yells at another cadet for asking him how he liked encampment. You notice and ask the Leadership Officer, Captain Campbell, to have a talk with him.

Twenty minutes later, Captain Campbell asks you to come outside and talk with her for a moment. She tells you that Cadet Spencer said he had a terrible time at encampment. She said that he was one of only three first-time attendees in his flight, and that the other cadets made him and the other first-timers do all the “lousy” jobs – he had to clean the latrine every day. One of the other new cadets had to make his roommate’s bunk – in addition to his own – every day.

Captain Campbell said she asked Cadet Spencer why he and the others did all these things, why they didn’t speak up. She said Cadet Spencer told her, “They said it was our job.”

Questions pertaining to this scenario to consider:

- 1. What are the pertinent facts?**
- 2. Are they facts or hearsay?**
- 3. Do Cadet Spencer’s allegations constitute hazing according to CAP’s definition? Why or why not?**
- 4. What, if anything, can be done to help Cadet Spencer if these allegations are true?**
- 5. What might the unit leadership have done to help prevent Cadet Spencer’s experience?**