



FRMT NEWS

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Three Deadly Nights

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There are three, just three. And no matter what the length of the new member or pledge program may be, these three deadly nights are always included if the chapter involved uses hazing practices.

First of the Deadly Three

The first night, of course, is the evening that the new members or pledges receive their bids. Although the bids may be presented during the day, the activities always occur at night. In the Greek community, we have a lot of different names for the simple process of inviting someone to join, don't we? "Bid Night," "Presents"(sic), "Call out," "Pass out"(men are passed along over a crowd on the hands of members), "Jump" (men leap into a crowd) and the list is long.

But those are just the preliminaries. The main event comes later and involves alcohol, usually a lot of alcohol. And yes, we've heard all of the excuses and tortured rationalizations about new members or pledges consuming alcohol within the context of bid night. They come in many different forms, from many different people. "They didn't have to drink." "We drank with them." "No one forced them to drink." "It was their choice." "Some guys didn't drink at all."

All of those excuses have one thing in common. They will not hold up in court, much less during a university judicial hearing. The fact is that new members or pledges do not have a choice...not if they want to be accepted....not if they want to be part of the brotherhood...not if they want to demonstrate that they truly belong.

An ever-increasing number of young men---most of them 18 or 19 years old---have made the choice to drink alcohol during bid night, and their lives ended between six and 48 hours later. Sometimes they were clinically dead (irreversible loss of brain stem function), and other times they were simply dead. Nonetheless they died. Again and again, the same sad facts surface---drinking a bottle or bottles of liquor as a new member or pledge class until the alcohol was gone...matching members, drink for drink...drinking in competition, drinking to demonstrate manhood...heavy and high risk drinking.

Standing for Brotherhood?

The second deadly night: "Bigs" or "Big Brother Night" an evening for the fraternity to bond with the new members and demonstrate support.

In a hazing chapter, Big Brother Night often involves an exchange of "gifts," a bottle of liquor for another bottle of liquor. Sometimes the type of liquor is determined by the "family" that the new member or pledge is joining. Regardless, the focus is not upon the gift aspect. It is upon consuming the liquor as a means of bonding with your big or little brother.

Fight for acceptance or a fight for life

Finally, the last of the three deadly nights, pre-initiation. The third deadly night is often the fraternal equivalent of a floating holiday. At some point during pre-initiation, the new members or pledges must consume alcohol...often an excessive amount of alcohol. Sometimes it is an act of mercy, if you 10-4 the hazers. "These guys need a break--we're actually helping them out." Sometimes it is planned or a hidebound tradition--"This is the night that they must drink a keg." Regardless, consumption and needless death occurs.

Moving Forward

Each situation of the three deadly nights involves a violation of FIPG or fraternity risk management policy. The use of alcohol at any event involving or focused upon new members or pledges is a violation, pure and simple. Moreover, these activities often violate the most basic federal, state, and local laws. All in the name of brotherhood.

Many, many people have written articles far more eloquent than this piece about hazing and the use of alcohol in hazing. Some of those people have been parents of young men who died in the process of joining an FRMT member fraternity. Some have been friends of the young men. Some are administrators at colleges or universities. Some have been professional staff members or volunteers of fraternities. Some simply see a cause to write.

Regardless of the point of view, we know one thing for certain. If a chapter allows alcohol into a bid night event, big brother night, or pre-initiation, that chapter has set the stage for a tragedy. Men's inter/national fraternity chapters are a most regrettable example of that ancient adage that, "Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." Perhaps this fall, we can demonstrate that we have learned two very important lessons.

1. Hazing and brotherhood are polar opposites. We cannot have one and rightfully have the other.
2. Alcohol and hazing are a deadly combination, especially on the three deadly nights.

We have so much to give to the young men joining our fraternal and interfraternal brotherhood...and they have so much to give to us. Let us commit ourselves to making these three nights examples of brotherhood, and brotherhood the example for fraternities.

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An experienced and popular speaker on the subject of fraternity hazing, Dave Westol is best known for his presentation "Hazing on Trial" delivered to thousands of audiences on hundreds campuses and numerous fraternal educational sessions over the past 25 years.



H1N1 Influenza: Fall 2009 Update

Concern about the H1N1 flu is increasing as students head back to campus. To date, the highest number of confirmed cases of the flu have been among people 5-24 years old, and colleges may act as a "point of spread." Additionally, the CDC recommends that those who are of higher risk for complications of this flu get the vaccine when it first becomes available. The recommendation includes most traditionally aged college students. Given these facts, the following suggestions may be helpful to those organizations who provide gathering spaces and housing for fraternity and sorority chapters.

Prevention: Staying Healthy and Preventing the Spread of the Flu

- Several steps can be taken to keep from getting sick and spreading this virus:
- Students should be encouraged to practice good hand hygiene. They should wash their hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing and sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Students should practice good respiratory etiquette. The main way flu spreads is from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezes, so it is important they cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. If a tissue is not handy, they should cough into their shoulder or elbow, not their hands.
- Sharing glasses and cups is never a good idea, especially during flu season. Drinking games are a great way for college students to become infected.
- Students should be encouraged to get vaccinated for seasonal flu.



Prevention: Protecting Your Living Space

House Corporation boards can take action to make it less likely for residents to become ill. Some of these steps include:

- Making soap, paper towels, and alcohol-based hand cleaners readily available.
- Making sure tissues and no-touch wastebaskets are readily available.
- Establishing regular schedules for frequent cleaning of commonly touched surfaces, including: Doorknobs, handrails, tables, telephones, chairs, sofas, bathroom surfaces, and counters and surfaces in dining rooms, computer rooms and meeting rooms.
- Providing disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces can be wiped down prior to each use.
- Encouraging students to frequently clean their living quarters. Students living together should regularly clean frequently used surfaces.

What to do if a member is infected?

Facilitate self-isolation of residential students with flu-like illness. Those with flu-like illness should stay away from classes and limit interactions with other people, except to seek medical care, for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines. Some people with influenza will not have fever; therefore, absence of fever does not mean absence of infection. They should stay away from others during this time period even if they are taking antiviral drugs for treatment of the flu.

- If possible, residential students with flu-like illness who live relatively close to the campus should return to their home to keep from making others sick. These students should be instructed to do so in a way that limits contact with others as much as possible. For example, travel by private car or taxi would be preferable over use of public transportation.
- Students with a private room should remain in their room and receive care and meals from a single person. Students can establish a "flu buddy scheme" in which students pair up to care for each other if one or the other becomes ill. If possible, healthy roommates should be provided alternative accommodations.
- If close contact with others cannot be avoided, the ill student should be asked to wear a surgical mask during the period of contact. Examples of close contact include kissing, sharing eating or drinking utensils, or having any other contact between persons likely to result in exposure to respiratory droplets.
- Instruct students with flu-like illness to promptly seek medical attention if they have a medical condition that puts them at increased risk of severe illness from flu, are concerned about their illness, or develop severe symptoms such as increased fever, shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, or rapid breathing.

At a press conference announcing CDC recommendations for institutions of higher education, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan was quoted. "We can all work to keep ourselves healthy now by practicing prevention, close monitoring, and using common sense," he said. "We know that some students may be affected by H1N1. Our top priority is making sure that they have a way to get well, stay well, and keep learning."

For more information, please go to www.flu.gov, a website created by the Department of Health & Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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Slips, Trips and Falls: Loss Prevention Tips

By Mick McGill, Client Advocate, Willis North America and an initiate of Kappa Sigma



Thousands of people are injured each year as a result of slips, trips and falls. These types of injuries can result in great economic loss, cause a great deal of physical pain and suffering and occasionally result in death. In most cases, injuries resulting from slips, trips and falls can be prevented by implementing inexpensive and common sense safeguards. Attempting to minimize the probability that these types of injuries will occur involve three basic fundamental steps:

- Understand how slip, trip and fall accidents happen
- Identify the physical hazards that exist
- Eliminate or minimize hazards contributing to slips, trips & falls

Statistics show that 60% of falls happen on the same level resulting from slips and trips. The remaining 40 percent are falls from a height. Slips happen where there is too little friction or traction between the footwear and the walking surface. Common causes of slips include the following:

- Wet or oily surfaces
- Occasional spills
- Weather hazards
- Loose, unanchored rugs or mats
- Flooring or other walking surfaces that do not have same degree of traction in all areas.

Trips happen when your foot collides (strikes, hits) an object causing you to lose your balance and eventually fall. Common causes of tripping include the following:

- Obstructed view
- Poor lighting
- Clutter in your way
- Wrinkled carpeting
- Uncovered extension cords and cables
- Bottom drawers not being closed
- Uneven (steps, thresholds) walking surfaces.

Both slips and trips result from some a kind of unintended or unexpected change in the contact between the feet and the ground or walking surface. This shows that good housekeeping and quality of walking surfaces (flooring) are critical for preventing fall accidents.

Good housekeeping is the first and the most important (fundamental) level of preventing falls due to slips and trips. Implementation of the following safeguards is critical in reducing these types of injuries:

- Cleaning all spills immediately
- Marking spills and wet areas
- Mopping or sweeping debris from floors
- Removing obstacles and clutter from walkways
- Securing (tacking, taping, etc.) uneven mats, rugs and carpets
- Always closing file cabinet or storage drawers
- Covering cables and extension cords that cross walkways
- Keeping working areas and walkways well lit
- Replacing burned out light bulbs and faulty switches

Without good housekeeping practices, any other preventive measures will never be fully effective.

Changing or modifying walking surfaces is the next level of preventing slip and trips. Recoating or replacing floors, installing mats, pressure-sensitive abrasive strips or abrasive-filled paint-on coating and metal or synthetic decking can further improve safety and reduce the risk of falling. However, it is critical to remember that high-tech flooring requires good housekeeping as much as any other flooring.

Effective loss prevention plans and programs start at the top with buy-in from leadership: House Corporations, Boards of Directors, Chapter officers. These leaders must buy into the importance of creating and providing a safe work environment for their residents. It is important they consistently communicate the importance of maintaining a safe environment to those residents. Residents can also assist in keeping the living environment safe by limiting damage, reporting maintenance issues and keeping the house clean. Investing in some of the basic loss control safeguards outlined above can result in a significant increase in the safety of the living unit.

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