



“Collin’s Law”: The New Ohio Anti-Hazing Act

The new law expands the scope of activities that constitute hazing to include acts to continue or reinstate membership in a student organization (not just acts of initiation) – and imposes harsher criminal penalties on individuals and educational institutions. The law also imposes reporting requirements on staff and volunteers of fraternities or sororities who are acting in an official capacity. Finally, the law requires educational institutions to post hazing violations on their public websites.

What You Need to Know

- **Definition of Hazing:** A person commits hazing by doing any act or coercing another to perform any act of initiation into a student organization or act to continue or reinstate membership with a student organization that causes a substantial risk of mental or physical harm, including coercing another to consume drugs or alcohol.
- **Increased criminal penalties on individuals:** Ohio law previously made it a misdemeanor to “recklessly participate” in hazing. Now, Collin’s Law adds a new provision making it a third degree felony for anyone who recklessly participates in hazing that includes coerced consumption of alcohol or drugs that results in serious physical harm.
- **Increased criminal penalties on educational institutions, staff, and volunteers:** Ohio law previously made it a misdemeanor for educational institutions (administrators, employees, or faculty) to “recklessly permit” hazing. Now, it is also a misdemeanor for alumni and volunteers of fraternities and sororities to recklessly permit hazing. In addition, it is now a felony to recklessly permit hazing that involves coerced consumption of drugs or alcohol that results in serious physical harm.
- **Reporting requirements:** It a misdemeanor for educational institutions and staff, alumni, and volunteers of fraternities and sororities who are acting in an “official and professional capacity” to “recklessly fail to immediately report” hazing to local law enforcement.
- **New anti-hazing policies:** Educational institutions must develop or update their anti-hazing policies and must cover *on- and off-campus behavior*.
- **Public reporting:** Beginning in 2022-2023, educational institutions must create a report of every violation of their anti-hazing policies and post the report to their public websites, including the name of the subject of the report (subject to privacy laws), the date of the report, a description of the violation, and the date of resolution.

Action Items for National Organizations and Local Chapters

1. Advise members of the broad (and vague) definition of hazing and the corresponding criminal penalties. Remember, the definition of hazing includes acts to reinstate or continue membership in an organization, not just acts of initiation, and may include **any act** that causes a substantial risk of mental or physical harm.
2. Ensure that risk management policies reflect the updated definition of hazing.
3. If you see something, say something. Educational institutions (administrators, employees, faculty, and teachers) and staff, alumni, and volunteers of fraternities and sororities who are acting in an official and professional capacity *must immediately report* their knowledge of hazing to law enforcement in the county where the hazing occurs or in the county where the victim resides.
4. Be aware that educational institutions are required to develop or revamp their anti-hazing policies and will begin to post hazing violations on their public websites in 2022-2023.
5. The new statute goes into effect on October 7, 2021.