



Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Support Battalion Hazing Statement

"Hazing is contrary to our ethos of "taking care of our own" and violates the high standard of virtuous conduct and soldierly repute earned by Marines who have served our Corps honorably since its inception. Hazing violates our institutional character and disrespects our most precious asset – our Marines and Sailors."

-- General James F. Amos



Hazing is any conduct that causes others to suffer or be exposed to any activity which is cruel, abusive, humiliating, oppressive, demeaning, or harmful. It creates a toxic environment that hampers mission accomplishment for even the most trained and skilled units. To ensure all hands understand what activities are considered hazing and the Marine Corps Policy towards these activities, every member of the Battalion will read and comply with the three page enclosure to MCO 1700.28B, *Marine Corps Hazing Policy*.

Hazing is unlawful, prohibited, and will not be tolerated within our Battalion. Professional Marines never treat other dishonorably by stripping each other of their dignity. Additionally, no member of this command shall engage in hazing or consent to being the subject of hazing. Bottom line, hazing is a symptom of leadership failure. No officer, Staff Noncommissioned Officer, Noncommissioned Officer, Sailor, or Civilian Marine in a supervisory or managerial position shall by act, word, deed, or omission condone or ignore hazing. Ignorance is not an excuse for addressing activities that leaders reasonably should have known to occur. Leaders at every level shall ensure that events conducted within their organizations comply with the given policies on hazing. Any violation, attempted violation, or solicitation of another person to violate the Marine Corps hazing policy subjects service members to disciplinary action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Within Headquarters and Support Battalion, we will proactively pursue a three-fold approach to combating hazing consisting of engaged leadership, training and accountability.

- Engaged Leadership. Leaders at every level are charged with ensuring all Marines are treated with dignity, care and respect. Leaders who are closest to the day-to-day actions of Marines and Sailors must remain ever vigilant for signs and instances of hazing and to intervene, report, and address them immediately when they occur.

- Training. There is no "rite of passage" involving hazing. Accordingly, we must conduct continuous values-based training that reinforces our institutional expectations for moral and ethical behavior to disavow the belief that activities classified as hazing can be justified in the name of history and tradition. Such training is most effective at the small unit level through "hip-pocket" sessions and coaching by first-echelon leaders who embody our Core Values.

- Accountability. All members of this command will be held accountable to live up to our Core Value of Honor. Honor is "the bedrock of our character. [It is] the quality that guides Marines to exemplify the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior . . . to respect human dignity; to have respect and concern for each other." -*Leading Marines*.

Every member of this command is responsible to inform their chain of command of any violations or suspected violations to Marine Corps hazing policy. Allegations of hazing will be brought to my attention without delay or independent investigation. I will investigate all hazing allegations in accordance with JAGINST 5800.7F (JAGMAN). Victims and witnesses will receive appropriate advocacy and protection from reprisal or re-victimization.

Semper Fidelis,

John R. Polidoro, Jr.
Colonel, United States Marine Corps
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Support Battalion