



## Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 24 Hazing Policy Statement



**Marine Corps and MAG-24 policy prohibits hazing—those who violate this policy will be held accountable.** I want to be very clear to all Marines and Sailors in Marine Aircraft Group 24 that hazing has no place in a disciplined and professional military force and will absolutely not be tolerated at any level or in any form in our MAG. Hazing violates our core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment and erodes the very spirit of our Group and the Marine Corps. It is the responsibility of every Marine and Sailor to make sure hazing does not occur. I cannot overemphasize my commitment to ensuring that all of our Marines and Sailors are treated with dignity and respect. Fidelity and keeping faith with each other is at the heart of who we are and defines how we treat each other.

Hazing can take many forms and is defined as any conduct whereby one military member, regardless of Service or rank, causes another military member, regardless of Service or rank, to suffer or be exposed to any activity that is cruel, abusive, humiliating, or oppressive. Soliciting or coercing another to participate in any such activity is also considered hazing. Hazing includes, but is not limited to, any form of initiation or congratulatory act that involves physically striking another to inflict pain, piercing another's skin in any manner, taping, greasing, shaving, blood-winging, blood-striping or pinning, requiring excessive physical exercise beyond what is required to meet standards, verbally berating another, encouraging another to excessively consume alcohol or to engage in illegal, harmful, demeaning or dangerous acts, or the forced consumption of food, alcohol, drugs or any other substance. Hazing need not involve physical contact among or between military members; it can be verbal or psychological in nature. Actual or implied consent by the victim does not make hazing OK—it's still wrong. Regardless of form, hazing is prohibited.

Hazing is a readiness, warfighting, and leadership issue and is counter to mission accomplishment. Hazing destroys our Marines' confidence and trust in their fellow Marines and in unit leadership and undermines unit cohesion and combat readiness. Unfortunately, there are some that confuse hazing with one of our many time-honored traditions and believe that they must force initiations or rites of passage on their fellow Marines and Sailors. Hazing does not promote loyalty, build *Espirit de Corps*, or prepare Marines for combat rather it impairs our ability to be an expeditionary force in readiness. Recruit training and officer commissioning programs are the sole rites of passage that our Marines and Sailors go through—there are no others, and there are absolutely not any at MAG-24!

I charge all leaders in the MAG, from our most junior section leaders to NCOs to SNCOICs to field grade officers to subordinate commanders and senior enlisted leaders, to ensure that all Marines and Sailors are treated with dignity, care, and respect and to be ever vigilant for signs of hazing within our Group. No commander or leader can condone or ignore hazing. Be particularly watchful during times of promotion, personal milestones, professional achievements and other celebratory events. Watch closely the arrival of new joins and new units to our MAG especially our younger Marines and Sailors arriving from the schoolhouse and that haven't yet been on a deployment. Be particularly attentive to preventing initiations of any kind and be committed to welcoming the newly joined to our Group with positive mentoring. With engaged, anticipatory leadership we can prevent hazing in MAG-24 and ensure we are keeping faith with our Sailors and Marines.

Report allegations of hazing through the chain of command to the Commanding Officer immediately. Reporting these acts is the right thing to do and is taking care of our own. We must all be mindful of the sensitivity to the victims and the witnesses and protect their privacy. Those who witness or know about acts of hazing but choose not to report are also violators of the hazing policy. All allegations of hazing will be promptly and thoroughly investigated and violators subjected to appropriate action in order to ultimately prevent acts of hazing and ensure that our Marines and Sailors are always treated with dignity and respect. Those guilty of acts of hazing, false allegations or those attempting reprisal against the victim or witness will be held fully accountable under the UCMJ.

The strength of MAG-24 will always be based on the mutual respect and dignity with which those of us who claim the title Marine and Sailor treat each other. Together, as a Team, we can accomplish any mission and ensure the continued success of MAG-24 to our Corps. Mission first, Marines & Sailors always.

Semper Fidelis,

Paul A. Fortunato  
Colonel, United States Marine Corps  
Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 24