



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
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**JUL 07 2021**

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MEMORANDUM FOR All Personnel

SUBJECT: Hazing and Bullying Policy Statement

1. References: Applicability and guidance for this policy comes from Title VII and Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and implemented by the following:

- a. Army Regulation 600-20, Army Command Policy, dated 24 July 2020
- b. Air National Guard Instruction 36-7, Air Guard Military Equal Opportunity Program

2. Purpose: Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish the policy and definition for hazing and bullying in the West Virginia National Guard.

3. Definitions:

a. Hazing is a form of harassment that includes conduct through which Soldiers, Airmen or Civilian employees without a proper military authority or other governmental purpose, physically or psychologically injure or create a risk of physical or psychological injury to others for the purpose of: initiation into, admission into, affiliation with, change in status or position within, or a condition for continued Military membership or employment in the organization. Hazing can be conducted through the use of electronic devices or communications and by other means including social media, as well as in person.

b. Hazing includes, but is not limited to, the following when performed without a proper military or other governmental purpose: any form of initiation or congratulatory act that involves physical striking of another individual in any manner or threatening to do the same; pressing any object into another person's skin, such as "pinning" or "tacking on" of insignia, badges, medals or any other objects; oral or written berating of another for the purpose of belittling or humiliating; encouraging another to engage in illegal, harmful, demeaning or dangerous acts; playing abusive or malicious tricks; branding, handcuffing, duct taping, tattooing, shaving, greasing, or painting; subjecting to excessive or abusive use of water; and the forced consumption of food, alcohol, drugs, or any other substance. Hazing is part of inclusion into the group.

c. Bullying is a form of harassment that includes acts of aggression by Soldiers, Airmen or Civilian employees, with the intent of harming others either physically or psychologically,

without proper military authority or other governmental purpose. Bullying is the exposure of an individual or group to physical and/or emotional aggression with the intent to cause distress or harm. Bullying may involve the singling out of an individual from his or her coworkers, or unit, for ridicule because he or she is considered different or weak. It often is indirect or subtle in nature and involves an imbalance of power between the aggressor and the victim. Bullying can be conducted through the use of electronic devices or communications, and by other means including social media, as well as in person.

d. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following when performed without a proper military or other governmental purpose: any form of initiation or congratulatory act that involves physical striking another in any manner or threatening to do the same; intimidating; teasing; taunting; oral or written berating of another for the purpose of belittling or humiliating; encouraging another to engage in illegal, harmful, demeaning or dangerous acts; playing abusive or malicious tricks; branding, handcuffing, duct taping, tattooing, shaving, greasing, or painting; subjecting to excessive or abusive use of water; and the forced consumption of food, alcohol, drugs, or any other substance; and degrading or damaging the person or his or her property or reputation. Bullying can be conducted through the use of electronic devices or communications and by other means, as well as in person. Bullying is often used for exclusion from a group.

e. Soliciting, coercing, or knowingly permitting another to participate, solicit or coerce such conduct may be considered bullying. Soldiers, Airmen, or Civilians will be held responsible for an act of bullying even if there was actual or implied consent from the victim, without regard to the Service, rank status, or position of the victim.

f. Hazing and bullying do not include properly directed command activities that serve a legitimate purpose, or the requisite training activities required to prepare for such activities (e.g., administrative corrective measures, extra military instruction, or command-authorized physical training).

#### 4. Policy:

a. Hazing, bullying, and discriminatory harassment of people or their property is prohibited; allegations of harassment will be addressed swiftly, individually, and in light of the circumstances. Hazing, bullying, online misconduct, and other acts of misconduct, undermine trust, violate our ethic, and negatively impact command climate and readiness.

b. There are many time-honored traditions in our Services, but hazing and bullying are not among them and have no place in our force. Hazing involves so called initiations or rites of passage in which individuals are subjected to physical or psychological harm in order to achieve status or inclusion in the organization. Bullying, on the other hand, involves acts of aggression intended to single out certain individuals from their teammates or co-workers, or to exclude them from a military element, unit or organization. Hazing and bullying are unacceptable and are prohibited in all circumstances and environments, including off-duty or in "unofficial" unit functions and settings. The prohibition on hazing and bullying extends to misconduct committed via electronic communications, social media, as well as in the context of in-person interactions

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and through other means. Social hazing norms thought to be acceptable in the past are no longer acceptable in the West Virginia National Guard.

5. Training must occur at all levels in order to educate prevention and response to hazing and bullying, from the accession point to the assumption of senior leader rank and position. All such training and education will include descriptions of the Military Department hazing and bullying policies and the definitions of both hazing and bullying. In addition, training will differentiate between hazing and bullying and appropriate administrative corrective measures, extra military instructions, and command-authorized physical training. The training must include examples of hazing and bullying behaviors and illustrate how these behaviors negatively impact the mission, as well as information on how to report hazing and bullying incidents, and victim rights and resources.

6. West Virginia National Guard leaders and managers are expected to take an active, ongoing part in ensuring that team building activities do not result in humiliating or degrading actions. All personnel are charged with the responsibility of reporting any behavior they witness that they regard as violent, threatening or abusive.

7. The Joint Forces Headquarters Equal Opportunity staff stands ready to assist all service members, federal employees and commanders throughout the process of addressing complaints of bullying or hazing. Individuals should not hesitate to contact the EO Office with questions, to seek assistance in filing a complaint, or to request assistance with the process.

8. Point of Contact for this activity is Ms. Deborah K. Amos, State Equal Employment Manager, at (304) 561-6430 or email [Deborah.K.Amos.civ@mail.mil](mailto:Deborah.K.Amos.civ@mail.mil).

  
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