



FIRE DEPARTMENT • CITY OF NEW YORK
Supplement No. 37 to Department Order No. 34
May 15, 2013



2.1.1

HAZING PROHIBITION

During the past six months I have been meeting with senior leaders of the Department to discuss how to make the FDNY, the nation's leading fire department operationally, a national model in diversity and inclusion. The Department has also researched and examined the best practices of other large, similar organizations such as ours – including the U.S. military and fire departments throughout the country.

The topic of hazing came up frequently in these discussions both within and outside the Department, and I am now ordering the adoption of a no hazing policy. A formal policy prohibiting hazing will be issued soon, but I wanted to share this information with you now because the prohibition against hazing is effective immediately.

Other fire departments and branches of the military have instituted zero tolerance policies against hazing, often in reaction to incidents that caused notoriety and resulted in serious injuries, disciplinary actions and even criminal charges. While we have not had such incidents and I don't believe hazing has been a serious problem in the FDNY, I believe it is nonetheless the right time for us to implement this policy. Hazing is not an acceptable form of "testing" new employees to see if they "measure up," nor is it necessary to forge firefighter camaraderie.

At a recent conference of Department uniformed and civilian leaders, all agreed that dignity and respect were core guiding principles of the FDNY. Our policy prohibiting hazing, like the Army's and Navy's, will emphasize treating all members of the Department with dignity and respect. By prohibiting hazing, we reinforce these principles and strengthen this Department.

With respect to probationary firefighters, my expectations are clear: Treat them with dignity and respect; welcome them and include them in everything we do; mentor and guide them with all that we've learned. In these ways, we will continue the great traditions of the FDNY and accomplish our goal of making sure they become the best firefighters they can be.

Salvatore J. Cassano,
Fire Commissioner