

The headlines are disturbing:

“A sorority is the focus of a university investigation after a freshman pledge ended up in the hospital late last month with severe alcohol poisoning.”

“Six weeks after leaving for college, the 18-year-old returned home in a casket, having died of alcohol poisoning from binge drinking at a fraternity initiation ceremony.”

“A freshman was found dead in his fraternity house. He died with a blood alcohol level more than five times the legal limit.”

The first night is the evening that the new members or pledges receive their bids. The second deadly night: "Bigs" or "Big Sister Night" is an evening for the sorority to bond with the new members and demonstrate support. Finally, the last of the three deadly nights, pre-initiation.

Dave Westol suggests that these traditions have become a platform for the excessive consumption of alcohol. Again and again, the same sad facts surface: drinking a bottle or bottles of liquor as a new member or pledge class until the alcohol was gone...matching members, drink for drink...drinking in competition, heavy and high risk drinking.

Each situation of the three deadly nights involves a violation of FIPG or sorority risk management policy. The use of alcohol at any event involving or focused upon new members or pledges is a violation, pure and simple. Moreover, these activities often violate the most basic federal, state, and local laws. All in the name of sisterhood.

If a chapter allows alcohol into a bid night event, big sister night, or pre-initiation, that chapter has set the stage for a tragedy. The only way to ensure the safety of your members is to remove alcohol from these events, remembering these points:

- Hazing and sisterhood are polar opposites. We cannot have one and rightfully have the other.
- Alcohol and hazing are a deadly combination, especially on the three deadly nights.

