



Fraternity Risk Management Policies & Discussion

Effective March 5, 2009

Social life is an important part of the college experience and of fraternity life. It is normal and healthy for students to gather to socialize, have fun, and temporarily leave behind their academic work. Westminster College, Inter-Fraternity Council, and the National Fraternity Office policies that follow are not intended to prevent fun, but to ensure it is done in safe and legal ways.

Ensuring that fraternity social events remain safe involves the hard work and commitment of the fraternity membership and leadership. Risk management is every chapter member's responsibility. Maintaining an individual's safety means preventing potentially dangerous or illegal behavior. Playing the "bad guy" may not always be fun, but it will ensure that everyone stays safe and the fraternity chapter, national organization, and the College are in alignment with their espoused values.

Non-Event Regulations

While most National Office, IFC, and Westminster College risk management policies relate most directly to events or parties, it is important to note that all Student Handbook and campus policies apply outside of events. Underage drinking, illegal drug use, sexual misconduct, and other violations can easily occur when the event risk management safeguards are not in place. It is never OK to look the other way when these things occur.

Event Definition

Policy - There are three types of events that may be registered by Greek organizations on campus; formals, mixers and socials. These events are defined using ratios of guests to members. Since our campus has three different membership levels, we consider a member as:

- Someone who is an initiative member of the chapter, often called an 'active'
- Someone who is preparing to become an initiated member of the chapter, often called either an 'affiliate' or a 'pledge'
- Any person who pays social dues to a chapter despite not fully participating in the chapter as an active member (i.e. special status, social members, alumni status)

A **formal** is an event that has a 1:1 ratio of members to guests. Formals can be held at an organization's own house, with either a Third Party Vendor, or as a BYOB event. These can also be held at an alternate location, on or off campus, with a third party vendor. All formals, on or off campus, must be registered unless they are defined as a 'formal dinner.'

A **mixer** is an event that also has a 1:1 ratio of members to guests, or a ratio of 1:1 with recognized organizations. A mixer is often held between two organizations on campus, with one organization being the sponsoring organization and the other being the guests of the event. If both chapters are considered sponsors for the event, both chapters must register the event.

A **social** is an event that can have a 3:1 ratio of members to guests. These events can be held in chapter facilities or in an alternate location on or off campus. In the case that a 3:1 ratio will take a chapter beyond fire code for an event, the chapter must default to the fire code as the maximum number of guests permitted.

For formals and mixers, the presence of security may not be necessary, depending upon the length of the event. If a sponsoring chapter wishes to request an event not have security present, the Director of Residential and Greek Life and Director of Campus Security will make the final decision. It is unlikely that this exception would be granted on a frequent basis.

Events sponsored with an organization from another college campus must be registered with both institutions.

Why?

- There needs to be some standard for what constitutes a “party.” By defining parties using chapter specific ratios, there should never be a question of how many attendees define an event from an informal gathering.

How?

- Organizations may register any of the above as chapter events. If a gathering develops on a night an event has not been registered, chapters are advised to follow the expectations for informal events.
- A chapter is responsible for monitoring attendance at events, and may need to ask uninvited guests to leave if an event outgrows these expectations. If this proves to be a challenge for the chapter, they are advised to contact Campus Security for assistance.
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Informal Events (Events that do NOT need to be registered)

Policy – We recognize that, on occasion, students will gather in quantities that don’t meet the definition of an event on our campus. Informal gatherings are permitted as long as they don’t exceed a 1:1 ratio of members to guests.

Formal dinner: A dinner gathering which occurs in chapter facilities would be considered an informal event. Formal dinners which are structured to occur over a seated dinner, hosted on a week night, with a 1:1 ratio of members to guests, and do not last longer than 2 hours do not need to be registered.

Why?

- It is important to make a designation between events that have the potential to pose high risk and ones that don’t. Gatherings that are organized for a single purpose (in this case, around a seated dinner) are not often environments for risky behaviors. Events which

occur over longer periods of time, which are purely social, and involve alcohol, are inherently more risky.

How?

- Organizations will not be required to register events that are classified as “informal events,” but should be aware that neglecting to register an event does not mean that risk management policies should be ignored. Even at these events, a chapter must follow the laws of the State of Missouri, campus policies and the policies and expectations for their National Office.
- Student leaders must make a conscious effort to manage activities at their house or within their chapter, even if an official event is not registered.

Event Registration

Policy – Events must be registered and approved by the Greek Advisor no later than two weeks prior to the event. While the Greek Advisor may make exceptions to this, late applications will most often be denied approval. National Offices may require earlier application.

Why?

- “Last minute” planning is a recipe for disaster. Two weeks gives the Greek Advisor enough time to review the application, provide feedback, and get a response from the chapter.
- Two weeks is also necessary to hire security, arrange for IFC party monitors, hire a third-party vendor, and make other arrangements for an event.

How?

- The appropriate form is available in the Greek Advisor’s office, or on the Greek Life website.
- A semester-long planning calendar should help the chapter meet deadlines. Deciding on Thursday to have a party on Saturday is not a good idea.

Guest Management/Guest Lists

Policy – Per the policy of many national organizations and/or fraternity insurance carriers, the sponsoring organization must maintain record of arrival for their guests, as well as actively monitor the amount of people in attendance. Chapter members are allowed one guest each for campus formals and mixers. No more than three guests per active member are permitted at socials. Fire code limits for the event location should also be observed. An official guest list is due to the Office of Residential and Greek Life the Thursday prior to an approved event. Chapters are expected to use this guest list at the ID checkpoint of their event.

Chapters may use a ‘flex list’ for guests who may show up on the night of the party. The flex list may not exceed the number of chapter members, and should be accounted for in their 3:1 ratio when planning their event. (For example, if a chapter is permitting 20 spaces on their flex list,

the pre-event guest list should leave 20 guests spots vacant.) Flex lists should be turned in to the Office of Residential and Greek Life the week following the event.

Why?

- In order to maintain adequate control, event size must be limited. Parties with hundreds of people, and possible strangers, will inevitably lead to breakdown of risk management procedures.
- Per National policies, events without specific guest lists are considered “open parties” and not approved by National organizations.
- It is much easier to manage an event with people you have personally invited and who have some sense of accountability to you as individuals or a chapter. It is a huge risk to simply allow entry to anyone who shows up.
- In the case that an incident occurs which requires follow-up both the chapter and/or the college, a well-maintained guest list will prove helpful during the investigation.

How?

- The guest limit should be determined beforehand and included in the event registration on the Pre-Party Checklist.
- Guest lists should be formed with intentionality, thus, open and/or public advertising is not permitted. (Advertising on campus via flyers, asking for RSVPs, is not an appropriate way to invite guests to your event. There is no selectivity with this process.)
- The sponsoring organization should have a way to check the guest list at the point of entry. The final guest list may be turned in as late as the Thursday prior to the event.
- To assist in managing guests at an event, access to the event should be controlled through one point and one point only. Organizations should utilize fencing, locked doors, or other methods to monitor entering and exiting traffic.
- Security working the party entrance should assist the chapter in tracking the number of people admitted, and turn people away when the capacity is reached.

Security

Policy – All registered events held at fraternity houses must have outside professional security staff, (unless receiving special permission from Residential and Greek Life). The security officers should assist in entrance control, policy enforcement, and ensuring the safety of the sponsoring organization and event guests. . The security staff is expected to confront and address any issues that fall outside of the risk management expectations, and should work with chapter leaders to effectively manage the event. For events held off-campus, organizations must enlist security support from the facility host.

Why?

- Having security present is a good back-up to chapter members controlling entrance, alcohol, etc.
- Security will be able handle any conflicts or other difficult situations that arise.
- Security can be valuable resource for sponsoring organizations.

How?

- As part of the event registration process, security will be arranged through the College security contractor; if security is not available the respective fraternity/sorority is responsible for acquiring their own security. A security contract must be provided to the Office of Residential and Greek Life no later than 48 hours prior to the event.
- Security officers assigned to work registered events will meet with the Director of Residential and Greek Life prior to the event to outline expectations and duties, and cover specifics of the upcoming event.
- Security officers are expected to have a 'briefing' with members of the sponsoring organization at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the event. This meeting should include at minimum, the chapter President, Risk Manager, and one additional officer within the chapter. This will insure that all people working the event are on the same page, and the officer has identified the 'go-to' members for the event that night.
- The hired officer(s) is expected to submit a post-event report to the Office of Residential and Greek Life within a week of the event.

Start/End Times

Policy – All events should have designated start and end times. Total event time may not exceed five hours and end times may not be past 3:00am without special permission from the Greek Advisor.

Why?

- First, for practical reasons – security has to be on duty and other controls up at defined times.
- Second, for safety reasons – the longer an event with alcohol goes, the more likely inebriation will lead to violence, sexual assaults, and other problems.

How?

- At the event's end time, the music should stop and guests should be asked to leave.
- Special care should be taken to identify anyone who is intoxicated to ensure their safe passage home.
- Security could be asked to assist chapters in ending an event.

Alcohol Provision

Policy – Alcohol may only be provided by a licensed and insured third-party vendor or through a "BYOB" system. Registered events held off-campus must have a third party vendor. Guests of legal drinking age should be designated with a wristband, provided by Residential and Greek Life. Underage individuals should still be identified (i.e. hand marking) and not served. Likewise, obviously intoxicated individuals should not be served.

For registered events listed as "BYOB," the check-in must limit the amount of alcohol checked-in by guests and allow only one beverage to be checked out at a time. In the interest of following guidelines set forth by the National offices of our chapters, chapters are expected to follow the

recommendations or requirements of their National board. In most cases, this is six (6) 12 ounce beers, or four (4) wine coolers or malt beverages. Anything beyond this should be requested on the party registration form and approved by the Office of Residential and Greek Life, and the chapter advisor.

In a “BYOB” situation, all alcohol must be checked into a central and secure area. The BYOB check-in should have some way to do the following: keep checked beverages chilled, monitor quantity and type of alcohol brought in by individual guests, and monitor quantity of beverages checked-out by guests.

Note – alcohol in chapter members’ rooms should not be accessed during an event by anyone other than the chapter member. All guests must get their alcohol through the check-in station. Guests should not be observed walking around a party with large quantities of alcohol, i.e. cases, 6-packs, 12-packs, 30-packs.

Why?

- This is the probably the most important part of making sure people stay safe – make sure the alcohol is controlled.

How?

- The check-in area should be near the entrance, and carry-in alcohol should not be allowed past that point.
- Chapter members must understand that they cannot store and distribute alcohol from their rooms. It may even be wise to close off the residential areas of the house during an event.
- If alcohol is being distributed from places other than the BYOB check-in or a third party vendor, security will likely confront the alleged location and could make a decision to shut down the party.

Hard Liquor

Policy – Hard liquor and mixed drinks are prohibited at registered events, unless provided by a third party vendor and approved, in advance, by the Office of Residential and Greek Life.

Why?

- Hard liquor is most often associated with high-risk drinking.
- Hard liquor quickly becomes a “common source.”

How?

- Only allow beer, wine, and wine coolers to be checked-in.
- Party monitors should be watchful for and confront anyone who has hard liquor bottles.
- Strictly enforce this with members especially.

Drinking Games

Policy – Drinking games, including keg stands, beer bong, ice blocks, beer pong, and card games, are prohibited.

Why?

- Drinking games are designed to cause high-risk drinking.

How?

- Party monitors should be on the lookout for these activities.

Alcohol Alternatives

Policy – Non-alcoholic drinks and non-salty food should be ample and freely available. A chapter is expected to spend a minimum of \$50 on the above alternatives, and have them available throughout the duration of the event.

Why?

- Food helps prevent rapid intoxication and illness. Non-alcoholic drinks encourage responsible behavior.

How?

- Have a set-up somewhere visible. Make sure a chapter member is responsible to keep it well stocked.

Sober Party Monitors

Policy – One Sober Party Monitor should be on-duty for every 20 guests in the maximum event size listed in the event registration. The monitors are free to participate in the event, but should consume no alcohol before or during it. A final list of sober party monitors should be given to the Office of Residential and Greek Life no later than the Thursday prior to the event.

Why?

- Keeping people safe means that someone responsible and sober should be watching out for them.
- A single individual watching more than 20 people would prove too difficult.
- Note that some national policies require a 15-to-1 ratio. Always follow the national policy if it is stricter than Westminster's policy.

How?

- Set your event maximum carefully so as to not have too many or too few monitors.
- Ensure that monitors are trained to watch for underage drinking, intoxicated individuals, inappropriate sexual conduct, or other dangerous situations.
- Have your sober monitors work in collaboration with the hired security to confront any behaviors that fall outside of the risk management policies.

Illegal Drugs

Policy – The possession or use of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited. Chapters are expected to take affirmative steps to ensure they are not present at events.

Why?

- Illegal drugs can quickly lead to any number of situations dangerous for individuals and the chapter.

How?

- Make your expectations clear and known. Get a reputation for being a house that doesn't tolerate drugs.
- "Don't ask, don't tell" doesn't work. If you see something, smell something, or hear something that suggests drug use, act on it immediately.

Sexual Misconduct

Policy – Behavior that is sexually abusive or intolerant is strictly prohibited. This includes inappropriate comments, touching, or sexually aggressive behaviors. In the state of Missouri, it is impossible for a person under the influence of alcohol to give legal consent to any sexual act, so do what you can to prohibit dangerous interactions or situations from occurring.

Note: A chapter should take reasonable steps to prevent any sexual misconduct from occurring at their events, but it is not expected that are responsible for any misconduct that may occur.

Why?

- Alcohol and sex are a bad combination that may lead to all sorts of things, including assault. Inappropriate behavior must be stopped before it can get that far.

How?

- Chapters should attempt to prevent inebriated individuals from pairing off and going to private rooms.
- Confront "minor" problems to prevent major ones.
- Challenge behaviors that are intolerant, unsafe or abusive to members of either gender, especially women.
- If sexual misconduct is a concern, party monitors should patrol private rooms to ensure the safety of event guests.

Off-Campus Events

Policy – Unless otherwise specifically stated, all risk management policies apply at off-campus events including alcohol. All chapter-organized off-campus events including alcohol must be registered, regardless of size. Safe transportation programs must be in place and strictly enforced.

Why?

- Some may think that when you go off-campus, there are no rules. In reality, there's little moral or legal difference when a chapter function is held off-campus instead of on-campus.

How?

- It may be especially tough to follow the same policies off-campus, but it's even more important.