

Risk Management

Involvement in a student organization at St. Cloud State University is a great opportunity to learn leadership skills, make lifelong friends, and positively influence the campus community. Risk Management is the process of thinking through and planning for the potential and perceived risks involved in activities and taking actions and proactive steps to minimize these risks. The goal of risk management is to ensure that student organizations plan and host events that are safe and fun for everyone involved!

There are five major factors that often lead to legal risks for student organizations. Any one of these factors may be applicable to the organization as a whole, the organization's officers, or individual members:

Ignorance of the Law - For example, this could be applicable to the student organization that does not adopt behavioral expectations, stating that when members are involved in hazing or sexually violent situations, it is not the responsibility of the organization. The entire organization, officers, or individual members may be found responsible under the St. Cloud State University Student Code of Conduct. Individuals found responsible for some actions classified as hazing or sexual assault and prohibited by the St. Cloud State University Student Code of Conduct, may also be faced with criminal charges or civil claims in a court of law.

Ignoring the Law - For example, although an organization knows that serving minors alcoholic beverages is illegal, they continue to violate the law.

Failure to Act - An organization that would allow risky behavior (such as a fist-fight or dangerous use of weapons or vehicles) to continue at a function could be held liable for the injury, because of its failure to take some sort of action to stop the behavior.

Failure to Warn - An organization that sponsors an activity that requires proper techniques for safe participation must inform all participants of the inherent dangers involved. Courts have held parties responsible for harm that is foreseeable and could have been prevented.

Expense - An organization that fails to appropriate funds to ensure and maintain safety at an event or activity that they sponsor may be liable in the event of an accident or injury.

Tips for Risk Management

The University does not require all student organizations to have a risk management policy in place in order to register. However, having an organizational risk management policy, and implementing it, goes a long way not only to reducing the possibility that something unfortunate happens, but it will also help to protect the organization in the event there are legal concerns. Organizations are welcome to consult with CSOLD staff members about constructing a risk management plan for the organization. Contact CSOLD at 320-308-3004, csold@stcloudstate.edu, or stop by AMC 139.

If organizations develop a risk management policy, consider addressing the following:

Alcohol and Other Drugs

- The illegal use, possession, distribution, manufacture or sale of any controlled substance, drugs, or alcoholic beverages is prohibited for individual student organizations:
 - At University events on or off campus;

- On travel status when representing the University (e.g., as a member of athletic team, sports club, Student Government Association, student organizations and groups, members of a University group, delegation, etc.).
- Further restrictions or allowances for legal and responsible use of alcohol may apply to individual students or student groups on travel status, based on the specific program's needs and direction of the faculty or staff supervisors/ advisers.

Travel

Your organization must adhere to the following policies:

- Students must be authorized to drive by the St. Cloud State University Buildings and Grounds Department.
- Advisers must approve University vehicle rental.
- A roster of who is traveling, including name and student ID number, must be submitted to the adviser (and Buildings & Grounds if a motor pool vehicle is used).
- Your organization should:
 - Use the travel planning forms offered by CSOLD in advance of travel.
 - Talk with your adviser about your plans.
 - Submit a list of emergency contact information for those traveling to the adviser.
 - *Note: if renting a vehicle from a St. Cloud State University department, review their procedures and policies before traveling.*
 - Motor Pool/Buildings & Grounds - <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/bldgsgrounds/motorpool.asp>
 - Atwood Memorial Center - <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/atwood/reservations/vehiclereservations.asp>
 - Campus Recreation - <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/campusrec/sportclub/sportclubforms.asp>

Hazing

- Hazing, which includes any form of mental, physical, or emotional harassment, degradation, intimidation or harm, is strictly prohibited. Organizations found to be incorporating any form of hazing activities into their recruitment, new member or ongoing organizational activities, will face appropriate sanctions for violation of campus, local, and state policy and/or law. St. Cloud State University strongly discourages the use of alcohol and other substances as part of club, group, and organizational activities. Further information on hazing may be found in the Student Code of Conduct.
- Plan member development activities thoughtfully.
- Confront any hazing-like behavior.
- Ensure that activities make members feel welcomed and included.
- Do not punish members for not participating in events.
- *Note: Consent on the part of the participant in hazing activity does not reduce potential liability for those engaged in hazing activities.*

Sexual Violence

- Be knowledgeable about the University's sexual violence policy.
- Develop a formal policy for your organization that presents a zero-tolerance policy toward any form of sexual violence.
- Educate members about inappropriate behavior including verbal harassment, physical and sexual violence.
- Confront inappropriate behavior.

Fire, Health, and Safety

- Ensure all places where your group hosts an event meets fire code policies/laws.
- Never exceed the posted maximum occupancy for any facility.
- Ensure there is no smoking in the facility.
- If firearms are present for an event, ensure there are proper permits and safety.

Educate Members about Risk Management

Organizations should educate all members annually on their risk management policy if they have one. Review the policy periodically to ensure current and relevant procedures are added.