



# FRMT NEWS

The FRMT Risk Management Newsletter, prepared by Willis HRH

Volume 23 Spring Semester 2009

## Are you a RESPONSE ABLE Bystander?

Alan D. Berkowitz, Ph.D.

Most fraternity and sorority members are occasionally uncomfortable with the behavior of some brothers and sisters. This minority may cause problems, act insensitively, or draw negative attention to the Chapter. Members may occasionally talk about it – but unless extreme – the bonds of brother and sisterhood usually mean that nothing is done.

Almost all the problems of the Greek system are problems in which there are bystanders who don't do anything. This is unfortunate because we know that most Greeks are responsible, hard-working, and contributing members of their community, and that as bystanders they are in the majority and could do something.

Currently efforts are being made to teach Greek men and women to respond effectively. An important new resource is a book and DVD package titled "RESPONSE ABILITY: Transforming Values into Action" featuring Greek men and women discussing reasons and solutions for bystander behavior. I was the expert consultant for this project and in the DVD I demonstrate effective intervention skills.\*\*

A bystander may not respond because they don't: notice the event, interpret it as a problem, or feel responsible for doing something. These are the "stages" of bystander behavior. If you don't notice something, you can't do anything about it. For instance, many Greeks don't understand that some pledging activities qualify as "hazing." Or, someone may notice, but think that it's not so bad. Even when concerned someone may feel that it is not their place to do something, or may not know how.

The ideals of the Greek system emphasize values, leadership, and doing the right thing. According to these ideals, we have a responsibility to "notice the event," "interpret it as a problem," "feel responsible for dealing with it," and "learn the skills necessary to act." If the Greek system is to fulfill its potential, we must go through these stages ourselves.



Then why don't we? There are natural reasons why people are bystanders and don't act when they want to, including fear of embarrassment, fear of retaliation, and the false belief that either others don't recognize a problem or are not bothered by it. Often these reasons are based on a misunderstanding of the situation

and how others feel. Correcting these misunderstandings will help us to do "the right thing." These reasons and possible solutions are discussed by the Greek leaders featured in the "RESPONSE ABILITY" DVD.

Working with Greek men and women I have learned that most want to do the right thing and care about their Chapters, but don't always act on their concerns. As a result a minority can set a bad tone, create a bad impression, or get the Chapter in trouble. My goal when I work with you is to help you stand up for what is good in your Chapter and for what you believe in, to help you understand that your concerns are shared by others, and to assist you in finding constructive solutions.

*(continued on page 2)*

If we could find a way to be more true to our ideals, then our Chapters would come closer to fulfilling what they were meant to be. People join for good reasons based on values, friendship, and community. By learning bystander "response ability" we can do more to realize these benefits. Thus, when

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someone is unsure about a problem they can ask a brother or sister how they feel and plan a response, seek out resources and speakers on bystander behavior, or utilize the skills demonstrated in the "RESPONSE ABILITY" DVD and book.

My sincere thanks for the leadership of all those who are making their Chapters into all that they can be – places of growth, understanding, community and responsible citizenship.

Alan Berkowitz is a frequent speaker on college campuses, helping students to understand and address the problems they experience in their fraternities and sororities, athletic teams, living units, and communities. He works with Greek men and women to help them constructively address the many challenges they face and offer steps that the Greek system can take to survive and be healthy. Alan has received five national awards for his work. To learn more go to [www.alanberkowitz.com](http://www.alanberkowitz.com) where you will find a list of workshops designed for fraternities and sororities. Alan can be reached at: [alan@fltg.net](mailto:alan@fltg.net).

*\*This article is a revision of the Introduction to the 2008 National Hazing Prevention Week Resource Guide.*

Response Ability was just awarded the Laurel Wreath Award for excellence in educational programming by the North American Interfraternity Conference. Willis HRH would like to thank all of the fraternities and sororities who have provided support for the RESPONSE ABILITY project through the Greek Video Consortium. It is not too late to join the Consortium and obtain this DVD and book for your organization. Willis HRH will pay the first \$1000 of the joining fee for its clients.



\*\*For information about the RESPONSE ABILITY DVD and book go to:

[www.beck-company.com](http://www.beck-company.com)

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A Vermont Reinsurance Company in partnership with the RSUI Insurance group to compliment the risk management programs of each member fraternity, such as the Risk Management College and providing the following member fraternities with a comprehensive liability insurance program:

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*For reproduction, comments, or thoughts on future educational columns, please contact the editor at: [edconsultant@willis.com](mailto:edconsultant@willis.com)*

# Window Safety: Reducing Hazards for Residents

By Mick McGill, Client Advocate, Willis HRH and an initiate of Kappa Sigma

Recently, there have been multiple instances of students falling from windows in fraternity houses throughout the nation. These falls have resulted in injuries and deaths. In some of the cases, windows did not operate correctly or safely. In other cases, lofts and beds were located too close to windows, creating a hazard for sleeping residents. Often, the student who was injured was impaired from alcohol. In all the cases, steps could have been taken to improve the safety of the students.

The following examples highlight different types of windows and the hazards they represent.



The wooden bar screwed into frame blocks escape. Any item installed to block egress must be able to be removed without the use of tools or keys.

The window does not secure shut due to a damaged locking mechanism and a crank mechanism that does not operate properly; therefore, the window freely swings open.



To correct these kinds of issues, the window hardware must be replaced and blockages removed. In addition, restrictors or bars can be added to the windows. Restrictors are designed to limit the distance the window can be opened preventing individuals from falling out of the window. <http://www.handlestore.com/restrictor-details.php?pid=19> is an example of restrictors that meet the code for release without the use of tools or keys.



## Window in **released** position

The restrictor is released for full window opening by pulling the window slightly and 'flicking' the arm towards you.

The restrictor will automatically re-locate to a closed and locked position.

Guardian Angel window guards are examples of window guards that can be installed on windows to prevent people from falling out of the window. The window guards need to be installed so the bars are vertical and cover the entire window - from top to bottom. <http://www.angelguards.com/cgi/cat.php>



Casement windows require vertical style guards, which cover the entire window opening from top to bottom.



This casement window has a protruding handle which happens to fit in between the bars.



The Guardian Angel comes with 4 emergency release buttons, 2 on each side.

Restrictors and window guards are only two methods of improving window safety. Other steps can be taken to protect students:

- Keep beds and lofts a safe distance from windows
- Build lofts in such a way that they do not obstruct windows; there should be a minimum of 36 inches of clearance
- Eliminate access to roofs
- Use stationary ladders to access bunk beds and lofts
- Ensure that windows operate correctly
- Inspect windows regularly to ensure that they are not broken or missing screens

Taking a look at the safety and security of your windows is a good idea as part of a comprehensive examination of the safety of your building. You may also want to look into policies on loft-building and access to roof areas as part of a safety assessment.

For self-inspection checklists and other resources to improve the security of your chapter house, go to [www.WillisFraternity.com](http://www.WillisFraternity.com) or contact Bobbi Larsen, Education Consultant at [blarsen@willis.com](mailto:blarsen@willis.com).

# PENNINGTON & COMPANY

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Make plans now to attend the 2009 Pennington & Co. FRMT Risk Management College, Tuesday, June 23 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The College will be held at the University Place Conference Center on the campus of Indiana University/Purdue University at Indianapolis. Two Tracks will be offered: Track I is designed for consultants and other front-line fraternity and sorority professionals. Track II is designed for executives and director-level staff. Volunteers and university professionals are also invited.

Featured speakers for 2009 include Linda Wright of Engle Martin Claims Administrative Services, Dave Westol of Limberlost Consulting, Jim Ewbank, attorney-at-law, and staff members of Willis HRH: Mick McGill, Rich Jungman and Bobbi Larsen.

For more information, including registration materials, please visit our website, [www.frmtltd.org](http://www.frmtltd.org), or contact Bobbi Larsen, Education Consultant for Willis HRH at (800) 736-4327 ext. 216, or [blarsen@willis.com](mailto:blarsen@willis.com).


Additionally, the College is pleased to provide an opportunity to participate in a supplemental training program. Dr. Alan Berkowitz, author of our cover article, *Are you a RESPONSE ABLE Bystander?*, will provide Bystander Intervention Training on June 24, and Mike Dilbeck, producer of *Response Ability*, will join him. Bystander behavior can be framed to address many risk management issues: hazing, alcohol and drug abuse, relationship violence. Dr. Berkowitz will be a strong addition to the curriculum.

To learn more about bystander behavior, plan to attend Bystander Intervention Training presented by Dr. Berkowitz on June 24, 2009, following the Pennington & Co. FRMT Risk Management College in Indianapolis. For more information, go to [www.frmtltd.org](http://www.frmtltd.org).



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<p>Interdisciplinary Institute for <b>H A Z I N G</b> Intervention</p>  <p><b>BUTLER UNIVERSITY</b> JUNE 10-13, 2009</p>	<p><b>CHANGE YOUR APPROACH TO HAZING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION</b></p> <p><b>Learn From and Network With National Leaders in Hazing Prevention</b></p> <p><b>&gt;&gt;&gt; LEARN MORE &amp; REGISTER! &gt;&gt;&gt;</b></p>
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