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Lessons from the Fall

The 2017-18 academic year was grim for the Greek world, with headline-grabbing pledge deaths at Florida State, Penn State, and LSU, among others. Those tragedies led to shutdowns in some locations and safer practices in many others, albeit under threats of criminal prosecution. Unfortunately, the lessons did not translate to a tragedy-free Fall 2018 with numerous troubling allegations:

- **Alcohol, Hazing, Death, and Crime at A&M?** The death of a [Texas A&M freshman](#) remains under criminal investigation. His fraternity has been found responsible for violating rules related to hazing and alcohol, and officials have labeled the death “unnatural.”
- **Alcohol, Hazing, Crime and Suicide at TCU?** A [TCU student](#) allegedly leaped to his death in October, following his arrest for hazing. Police had arrested the deceased student and another brother, after a pledge was taken to the hospital for apparent alcohol poisoning. The fraternity is suspended, and the now deceased student was due in court soon.
- **Alcohol, Hazing, and Death at Kentucky?** We previously reported on the death of a small child at the [University of Kentucky](#) – hit by a car driven by a fraternity pledge, after drinking at a tailgate. The fraternity is closed and the pledge was arrested. Criminal charges remain pending.
- **Alcohol, Pledgeship, and Death in Ohio?** In November, a recent [pledge of an Ohio University fraternity](#) died after passing out. The ambulance was called to an “unofficial annex” of the fraternity, an off-campus house. The matter remains under investigation.

The common factors in these deaths are striking: alcohol and hazing the most prominent. The lessons are ones you have heard before:

- Proactive leadership matters
- Your risk management program is critically important
- Everyone has a role in protecting brothers and pledges

The alternatives are too tragic and preventable to allow a repeat in 2019.