

Substance-Free ●●● Housing Policy

BETA THETA PI BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Preamble

Betas have long believed that the Fraternity should provide a sense of home and belonging that flows from the alignment of our environments and organizational values. Betas also believe that true brotherhood is fostered through shared social experiences that facilitate trust and deep, meaningful relationships. Our homes, be those chapter houses or a sense of belonging within the brotherhood, shape our cultures. In this critical and defining moment within our Fraternity, as well as the Greek movement, it is essential that we do everything within our power to promote the safety of our members and guests and the health of our chapter cultures.

“This reform movement is necessary and historic. More is needed from all fraternities and the universities they call home.

So, it is the basis for Beta’s courageous leadership now.”

— Ret. Senator
Richard Lugar,
Denison '54

To advance Beta’s strategic priority of Home, the Fraternity has formed a General Fraternity House Corporation and is pursuing the creation of comprehensive housing standards to promote the safety and proper management of our Beta homes.

While these standards address many best practices, the impact of drugs and alcohol in our homes is significant and requires immediate attention. Alcohol and properly used legal substances are not inherently harmful, however, the Board of Trustees has studied the impact that substances have on the performance of our members and chapters under the Board’s current substance-free housing policy that has been applied to all new and re-established chapters over the last 15 years.

The data clearly indicates that the 64% of our housed chapters that currently reside in substance-free housing achieve better grades, attract more members, have significantly less risk management incidents and account for substantially fewer chapter closures and reorganizations than their peers who live in houses that allow substances. Grounded in this thoughtful consideration and in feedback from our brothers, the Trustees have concluded that a substance-free housing standard





“The Board of Trustees is convinced Beta Theta Pi cannot be tepid on these matters of consequence. The stakes are simply too high. Beta must lead.”

— S. Wayne Kay,
Virginia Tech '73

is foundational to the remaining housing standards as Beta pursues environments that promote a culture reflective of men of principle.

The Trustees have long been tasked with the safety and welfare of our brotherhood, as evidenced by their administration of Beta’s risk management policy, insurance program and current substance-free housing policy. They are also required to be responsive to the challenging environment that Greek life operates in on today’s college campus. Increasing suspensions of campus-wide Greek activities, student injuries and deaths associated with Fraternity events, and increased public and legal scrutiny require that Beta, and our peers, take courageous action to protect the future of our brotherhood.

During the Trustees’ annual fall 2017 planning meeting – following several months of critical analysis, they affirmed their intention to expand Beta’s existing substance-free housing policy and committed to seeking broad and diverse feedback from members, volunteers and peer organizations to inform its focus and overall approach. The following policy represents the product of those labors and seeks to again position Beta Theta Pi as a champion for the safety and welfare of our members, as well as an interfraternal leader in the Greek world.

Substance-Free Housing Policy of the Board of Trustees (2003)

All colonies and re-established chapters that are started after 2004 will reside in substance-free housing in perpetuity. – *Adopted by the Beta Theta Pi Board of Trustees in 2003*

Substance-Free Housing Policy of the Board of Trustees (2018)

- I.** In furtherance of providing safe homes that promote the cherished values of our Fraternity, all Beta Theta Pi chapter housing¹ shall be substance-free² by August 15, 2020, per the following stipulations:
 - A. Existing Chapters and Colonies:** That all existing chapters and colonies that reside in substance-free housing as of August 15, 2018, under campus, alumni or Board Substance-Free Housing policy³ shall remain so and without the transitional considerations outlined below.



- B. New Chapters and Colonies:** That all new colonies or re-established chapters that are started after August 15, 2018, shall reside in substance-free housing and without the transitional considerations outlined below.
- C. Transitioning Chapters:** That those chapters that do not reside in substance-free housing under campus, alumni or Board Substance-Free Housing policy on August 15, 2018, shall transition to substance-free housing by August 15, 2020, per the schedule and considerations below:

i. That by August 15, 2018, all transitioning chapters shall:

1. eliminate the presence, consumption and use of hard alcohol⁴ within chapter housing at all times.
2. limit the presence, consumption and use of beer and wine to the private bedrooms of members who are of the legal drinking age.
3. limit the presence, consumption and use of beer and wine in the common areas⁵ of chapter housing to a maximum of six Alumni-Hosted Events⁶ per calendar year. Alumni-Hosted Events must:
 - a. be planned and approved by the Alumni Corporation or Alumni Association president, the chapter counselor and the chapter president on behalf of a chapter in good standing using the established Event Planning Checklist for hosting an event with a third-party vendor.
 - b. follow all campus, IFC, local and federal rules, regulations and laws, including the Beta Theta Pi Risk Management Policy.
 - c. be approved by the district chief at least 14 days in advance of the event per an established event approval process⁷.

ii. That by August 15, 2020, chapters will complete their transition to substance-free housing – including removal of all alcohol and substances from private bedrooms – with the continued ability to host up to six approved Alumni-Hosted Events per year.

“No doubt action of this nature can and will be difficult in a civilization that gives a ‘wink-wink’ to college-oriented behavior – until things go wrong. But Beta, while certainly not perfect, has historically been known as a Fraternity that does the hard but important work.”

— Tom Cassidy,
Cincinnati '76



2. To support our brothers and volunteers as they rise to this elevated standard and commitment to safety, the Board of Trustees commits to the following:

- A. The ongoing study and evaluation of the new policy during and beyond the transitional process to ensure that it is advancing the safety and values of our brotherhood.
- B. The development of financial, educational and communications resources related to substance-free housing that will support chapters in their recruitment, member education, social event planning and alumni relations activities.
- C. The ongoing coaching and mentoring through committed volunteers and staff to assist chapters and volunteers through the transitional process.
- D. The establishment of a tiered risk management fee schedule that better allocates costs and provides incentives to chapters based on performance and risk profile.
- E. For competitive parity, the consistent and strategic advocacy for the adoption of similar substance-free housing policies among all Greek-letter organizations and by all university and college administrations that oversee Greek life across North America.

Review the Trustees' answers to some frequently asked questions regarding the Fraternity's new substance-free housing policy. beta.org/sfh-faq

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¹ **“Chapter Housing”** is defined as any facility and affiliated property owned, operated or leased by the chapter directly, by its host institution for the purpose of housing chapter members or by a Beta Alumni Corporation.

² **“Substance-free”** is defined as the elimination of the possession, use, distribution or consumption of all illegal and illicit substances, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or controlled substances without an appropriate prescription issued to the user by a licensed professional.

³ **“Board Substance-Free Housing Policy”** is defined as the 2004 substance-free housing policy that applies to all colonies and re-established chapters in perpetuity.

⁴ **“Hard Alcohol”** is defined as any distilled beverage containing more than 0.15 alcohol by volume (ABV).

⁵ **“Common Areas”** are defined as communal or dining spaces within a chapter facility that are open for common or public use, and all outdoor space or parking lots associated with or adjacent to chapter housing.

⁶ **“Alumni-Hosted Events”** are defined as events within common areas of chapter housing that are primarily aimed toward socialization with alumni, parents or faculty. Alumni Associations or Corporations must contract with a licensed third-party vendor to sell and distribute alcohol to members and guests of legal drinking age.

⁷ **“Event Approval Process”** will be established by the Administrative Office staff per the Trustees' direction.