

Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (CVMA)

Basic Motorcycle Club (MC) Protocol 101

1. Motorcycle club patchholders are people too. They have good and bad days; they have jobs, families, and normal everyday problems and concerns just like anyone else. There are those who no matter what you say or do, it will not be right with them. Just like with any group, you will find both good and bad.
2. Protocol and respect are primary rules when dealing with an MC patchholder. If you are formally introduced to a MC patchholder, make sure either the person doing the introduction (or you) make sure they know what club you belong to and if you are an officer, what position you hold. Under no circumstances do you interrupt to correct a mistake while that person is introducing you or while they are talking. Wait until the introduction is done & politely introduce yourself correctly (use your name, not your nickname or road-name. Nicknames and/or road-names may come later i.e.
 - Joe Rider, Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, Anytown, Colorado.
 - Fred Spokes, Chapter XO, Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, Anytown, Colorado.
3. Greet them as you would meet anyone else & wait until the offer is made to shake hands. DO NOT interrupt; wait for them to recognize you. DO NOT be offended or make a big deal if they do not offer to shake your hand. Many times, they want to get to know about you and your association a little better before they will offer to shake your hand.
4. Never, ever, lie. You can refuse to answer a question in a polite manner by saying something like, "That seems like association business, and I would like to refer that to one of our officers in order to get better information for you." Be prepared to answer questions about what your club is about i.e.
 - A. "The Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association is not a motorcycle club and has no intention of ever trying to become a motorcycle club."
 - B. Our Patch is earned by being a veteran who has served in combat in one of our countries military branches.
 - C. We pay annual dues that are used to benefit veteran's organizations.
 - D. All makes and models of motorcycle above 500cc qualify for eligibility.
 - E. We are a non-territorial association and do not claim territory.
 - F. We are a neutral association and do not wear any motorcycle club support patches.
 - G. Women riders are welcomed and in some cases are club officers.
 - H. Do NOT offer forum links or web sites, it is better to refer them to an association officer.

- I. Do NOT brag about how large the local or national membership is.
 - J. Do NOT volunteer association information. If they ask a question about the local chapter answer it if you can. If they start asking questions about the number of members, or the National chain of organization refer them to one of the association officers.
5. Women in leadership positions or being a patchholder in motorcycle clubs, while not unheard of, are very rare. That is just the way it is. Most motorcycle clubs would also rather deal with a man if there were business to conduct. The majority appreciates what the CVMA is about and, for the most part, will accept a woman as an officer, and a woman officer will most likely be allowed to attend any meeting. Whether or not they will deal directly with a woman officer or not depends on the individual MC/chapter. There is no set rule for this and they will let you know if it is ok with them or not. Many motorcycle clubs do not care to deal with the National officers. They would prefer to deal with the local or state representatives.
 6. If anyone knows an MC patchholder, do not let him or her throw the patchholders' name, nickname or club's name around as if they are a great buddy of theirs . . . even if you are. Many motorcycle clubs consider that as a major disrespect to the whole club.
 7. Watch where you are when speaking about them, and never say anything about them in public because you never know when that woman, man, or kid in regular clothes standing near you might be one of them, or a "support member." MC patchholders do not always wear their colors. By the time the story gets back to the dominate MC in your area, it will have been changed many times over and could be blown up way out of proportion.
 8. Anything said about them between CVMA members is CVMA business ONLY. If comments, even those said in a joking manner were to get out, problems could start. Discussion outside the privacy of the chapter can start rumors, which could cause many problems for not only the chapter, but also for other chapters in and out of the state.
 9. If for some reason you have to say something while in public about an MC, take the person you are talking to aside, alone, and say ONLY what you need to say to get your meaning across. Say as little as possible so anyone else cannot overhear it and misunderstand what you are talking about.
 10. Watch where you wear your CVMA backpatch and it is just common sense to stay in numbers when wearing the patch. Some motorcycle clubs can be very territorial and some clubs do not see any difference between the CVMA and MC, good or bad.) If you are unsure of the areas or places normally frequented by motorcycle clubs, find out from your club officers. If you are planning on traveling and are concerned about what the situation may be in regard to the relationship with the local motorcycle clubs in the areas you'll be traveling through or staying in, talk to your local officer and ask if they can find something out by contacting the officers in the areas you will be in.
 11. "SHOW RESPECT." That is A #1 with them! This is worth repeating and remembering.
 12. If you already know a MC patchholder, or get to know one in the future, do not just walk up to him/her and interrupt when they are with other members. Wait until he/she acknowledges you first and NEVER touch them or put your arm around them like a buddy. Do not put your hand out to shake theirs; wait for them to extend their hand first.

If for some reason, you are not acknowledged at all, just keep walking. If you need to talk to an officer of a MC the proper way is to go through the Sergeant-at-Arms or one of the patchholders.

13. You have to decide whether or not you want to show respect by going to any of their functions or if you want to avoid all of them all together. If you do choose to show respect and go, you can do this in a way that may make you feel more at ease by going to one of their "support's" functions instead of the top club's function (if they have a support patch then you're still indirectly showing the top club respect). However, if you do go, then you also have to go to their rival clubs' function or you will be telling everyone that you are not a "NEUTRAL" club as you said you were. (Example: If you go to the Club A's function then YOU HAVE TO GO to the Club B's function etc) You have to decide how you want to stay neutral, by going or not going and you have to let all the other area chapters know if you are going too, so they are not in the dark and we can ALL stay on top of things.

NOTE

The best way to support them and still give the appearance of being a neutral club is to attend only "open to the public" events that a motorcycle club may be sponsoring.

If you feel that you do want or need to go to a "limited event," then you'll have to go representing yourself as yourself, preferably without wearing any patches identifying the CVMA. Remember, if you are wearing your CVMA back-patch, you are considered by everyone to be representing the whole association. If anything were to turn sour, then your whole club could wind up with problems down the road. In addition, once the rivals of that club you visited find out, and they will, then those rivals will see you as no longer being neutral and you could be considered a rival of theirs too.

14. No Chapter Location Bars (CLB), any territory rockers, or anything giving the appearance of a rocker should be worn with the CVMA back-patch. State flags, state logos may be worn in some areas and not in others. Check with the chapter officers to make sure what is and is not accepted in your area.

15. If someone from a MC requests that you remove your vest/patch, do not argue. The best way to reply: "Not a problem" and politely take it off and let your chapter officers know what MC it was so they can deal with any potential problems. Remember that you will only be asked once.

16. If an establishment has a sign indicating "No Colors," even though your CVMA back-patch is not considered "colors", the vest should be removed out of respect to the other clubs and the policy of the establishment. It is only respectful, as a CVMA member, to honor the house rules. Motorcycle clubs that honored the "house rules" would probably be deeply offended that you did not. Also remember many establishments choose to have this policy and it applies to all clubs that use any kind of patch; they do not distinguish between the CVMA and an MC. Be aware of the local MC hangouts and its best not to wear the CVMA back-patch into them without an invitation.

17. DO NOT wear your CVMA back-patch into an MC clubhouse unless you have asked if it's ok to do so or have been invited for a "sit down" with the officers of the MC or been invited, as a CVMA member, to attend a function there.

18. about women who are with a MC, but not in the club: "Old Lady" is not a negative or derogatory term; it is just a slang term commonly used. "Property Of" patches are their way of showing support for their man and the club he is in.

19. A patchholder may not, and many times will not, acknowledge your wife or girlfriend, especially upon a first meeting.

20. DO NOT touch or sit on a patchholder's bike unless invited to do so. Do not expect the invitation.

21. A prospect can usually be identified by the back patch that they are wearing. There are many different ways motorcycle clubs identify prospects. They can have the rockers without the main patch. They can actually have a patch saying "PROSPECT." Some do not wear any patch, because all the patchholders know who the prospects are. You want to treat a prospect or even someone you suspect is a prospect the same way you would treat a patchholder - with respect and courtesy.

22. Have absolutely no doubt that a MC is serious and many have been known to physically educate a person who shows disrespect or displays a bad attitude.

23. Be aware of the behavior and attitude of the other CVMA members who are with you at events (especially if anyone has been drinking). If necessary, try to take action to avoid problems before they happen. For example, if someone appears to be getting too angry or loud and possibly disrespectful, take them aside or suggest going somewhere else until things settle down. You could also let one of the officers of the club know about the situation. If an incident should occur in spite of your efforts when no association officers are present, make sure to let your officers know as soon afterward as you can. If no association officers happen to be there, then ALL of the CVMA members that are there need to attempt to take that person aside and strongly suggest that the offending CVMA member go somewhere else to settle down.

24. Be aware that problems created in one part of the country by a CVMA member or issues with the CVMA in one area have the potential to affect CVMA members in other areas and states.

25. The term Brother or Bro has special meaning to a Patchholder; do not call a Patchholder Brother or Bro. Their Brothers are fellow Patchholders and those that have earned that term.

26. DO NOT touch any part of another club member's colors, which includes the vest or jacket it is sewn on. That is considered serious disrespect, which could cause them to educate you very aggressively for being un-informed.

Remember this is only a Basic on protocol. When traveling in MC circles, the "Golden rule" that should guide your conduct and is something that you should always bear in mind: "SHOW RESPECT." If you give respect, you will get respect. If you act like an asshole, you will definitely be treated like an asshole."