



Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (CVMA)

National Protocol

Points to Remember

1. Protocol and respect are primary rules when dealing with an MC patch-holder. If you are formally introduced to an MC patch-holder, make sure that you or the person doing the introduction know what association you belong to and if you are an officer and what position you hold. Under no circumstances should you interrupt to correct a mistake while that person is introducing you or while they are talking. Wait till the introduction is done, then politely introduce yourself correctly i.e. "Jim Smith, Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, Any Town, USA," "John Johnson, Chapter Sergeant-at-Arms, Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, Any Town, USA" or "Bob Williams, State Representative, Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, Any Town, USA." Use your name and not your road name or nickname these may come later.
 2. Greet them as you would anyone else that you meet.
 - Wait until the offer is made to shake hands.
 - Always remove your glove before shaking someone's hand; it's just a basic form of courtesy.
- However:
- Do not interrupt; wait for them to acknowledge you.
 - Do not offend 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 club a little better before they will offer to shake your hand.
3. An MC patch-holder may not, and many times will not, acknowledge your wife or girlfriend, especially upon a first meeting and should not be considered disrespectful.

4. In regard to women who are with a MC club, but not in the club, "Ol' Lady" is not a negative or derogatory term; it's just a slang term commonly used. In an MC, the "Property of patches show support for their man and the club that he is associated with.
5. "SHOW RESPECT." That's the top priority with them and is worth repeating!
6. Never be quick to walk up to a MC patch-holder in a public setting, even if you already know them or your groups are on friendly terms. If you want to greet them, walk up slowly and wait for them to acknowledge you. Do not interrupt when they are with other members. Wait until they acknowledge you first. Never touch them or put your arm around them like a buddy. Don't put your hand out to shake theirs; wait for them to extend their hand first. If for some reason you're not acknowledged, just keep walking.
7. If you need to discuss an issue with an MC, the correct way is to ask for a meeting. This should be done by the local Chapter Chain of Command, State or Regional Representatives going through the respective MCs Sergeant-at-Arms and requesting a sit-down.
8. Most clubs realize that the CVMA is not an MC but more like an RC. When approached, be aware that most patch-holders will want to deal with the local Chapter Chain of Command, State or Regional Representatives.
9. Always know where you are when speaking about an MC, 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, a family member or a "support member." MC patch-holders do not always wear their colors. By the time the story gets back to the dominate club in your area, it will have been changed many times over and could be blown up way out of proportion.
10. Anything said about an MC between CVMA members is our business only. If comments, even those said in a joking manner were to get out, problems could start. Discussion outside the privacy of the CVMA can start rumors, which could cause a lot of problems for not only the chapter, but also for other chapters in and out of the state.
11. 11. If for some reason you have to discuss something while in public, take that person you need to talk to aside, keep your voice down, be aware of anyone coming within listening distance and say as little as possible so anyone else can't overhear it and misunderstand what you're talking about.
12. If anyone in your group knows an MC patch-holder, do not allow them to throw the club's name, the patch-holder's name, nickname or road name around like they are best friends.....even if you are. Many clubs consider that as a major disrespect to the whole club.
13. Watch where you wear your patch and it's just common sense to stay in numbers when wearing the patch. Some MC's can be very territorial and some clubs don't see any difference between an Association, a RC and a MC, good or bad. If you are unsure of the areas or places normally frequented by MCs, find out from your local CVMA Chapter

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, your Chapter Officers should be able to find something out by contacting the Chapter, State or Regional officers in the areas you will be in.

14. You have to decide whether or not you want to show respect by going to any MC functions or if you want to avoid 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 club functions instead of the top club's function (if they have a support patch then you're still indirectly showing the top club respect). But if you do go, then you also have to go to any rival clubs' function or you'll be telling everyone that the CVMA is not a "neutral association" as we have always stated. (Example: If you go to the Club A's function then you have to go to Clubs 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're going too, so they're not in the dark and we can all stay on top of things.

It is equally important that you appreciate and understand that this "neutral association" works both ways. If, in addition to being a member of the CVMA, you are also a patch-holder of an MC, one of their support clubs or any other motorcycle group/organization, do not wear that club's back-patch, soft-colors or support clothing to a closed CVMA event, function or meeting.

A better way to support them and still give the appearance of being a neutral association is to attend only "open to the public" events that an MC 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, without wearing any patches identifying your affiliation to the CVMA. Remember, if you're wearing your CVMA patch or soft-colors, you are considered by everyone to be representing the CVMA. If anything were to turn sour, then the whole association could wind up with problems down the road. Also, once the rivals of that club you visited find out, and they will within a day or two, then they will see you as no longer being neutral and you could be considered a rival of theirs too.

15. Do not wear your CVMA patch into an MC clubhouse unless you have been invited for a "sit down" with the officers of the MC or have been invited as a CVMA Member, to attend a function there.
16. No Chapter Location Bars, territorial rockers, rocker patches or anything giving the appearance of a rocker (see "Rocker" in Glossary section) are to be worn with a CVMA back-patch. Additionally, no state flags, state images or state logos, which could be interpreted as claiming territory, are to worn on the front or back of the vest, jacket and soft colors.

Diamonds and/or any cube shaped patch that could be taken as a 1% MC (front and back), any % patch (2%, 3%, 99%, 100% etc. regardless of the shape) and/or rib/side rockers (worn on the lower front of the vest or jacket) will not be worn on the vest or jacket. "Property-Of" patches will not be worn with any CVMA back-patch. It's best to check with your Regional Representative, State Representative or Chapter officers to make sure of what is and is not acceptable in your region.

17. Appreciate the fact that certain flash patches represent a negative association or evoke imagery that may be detrimental to the CVMA and our mission. The majority of mainstream society view the pentagram, KKK, swastikas, SS lightning bolts, Norse runes, Nazi eagle, the three-sevens, the hammer & sickle and neo-Nazi symbols as being part of an extremist and/or racist organization. We are veterans, warriors and should represent ourselves as such to the general public and the motorcycle community.
18. Do not mix CVMA and MC colors and/or patches. CVMA and MC colors/support patches etc., are not to be worn together. Wearing the CVMA patch with anything identifying an MC could be seen as showing support for that MC. Confederation of Clubs (CoC) patches may be worn with the CVMA patch as it shows support for all member riding organizations.
19. The display of a Get-Back Whip on one's motorcycle while wearing any CVMA Back-patch is discouraged. This is due to the fact that certain color combinations in different regional locations are taken as a sign of support for a particular MC. If you must add a Get-Back Whip to your bike's personal, ensure that it is solid black which demonstrates a neutral stance. As there may be local statutes and/or ordinances governing their display/use, check with your Regional Representative, State Representative or Chapter officers to make sure of what is and is not acceptable in your region.
20. If someone from a MC requests that you remove your vest/patch, don't argue. The best response is: "No Problem" and politely take it off and let your local CVMA Chain of Command know which motorcycle club it was so they can deal with any potential problems. You normally will only get asked once.
21. If an establishment has a sign indicating "No Colors" the vest should be removed out of respect to the other clubs and the policy (some bars will not even allow soft colors or leathers), it's only respectful to honor the house rules. These establishments chose to discriminate against patch-holders, which is any biker who wears the back-patch of his organization. Anyone in the motorcycle community should boycott these establishments due to their blatant discrimination against bikers an MC that honored these "house rules" would probably be deeply offended that you didn't. Remember that many establishments choose to have this policy and it applies to all clubs that wears any kind of patch; they do not distinguish between MCs, veteran's organizations or RCs. Also, be aware of the local MC hangouts and its best not to wear our CVMA patch into them without an invitation.
22. Do not, under any circumstances, lie! You can decline 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." Be prepared to answer questions about what your association is about. Such as:
 - "We are the CVMA and we are not an MC and have no intention of ever trying to become a MC."
 - "Our Patch is earned by being a United States Military Combat Veteran."
 - "We pay small yearly dues that are used to benefit veteran issues."

- “All makes and models of motorcycle with a displacement of at least 5000cc are welcomed in the CVMA.”
- “We are a non-territorial association and wear nothing signifying territory.”
- “We are a neutral association and do not wear any MC support patches.”
- “Women riders are welcomed as full members if they have served in harm’s way in one of our military branches.”

Additionally:

- Do not offer telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, forum links or web sites, it’s better to refer them to your local CVMA Chain of Command.
 - Do not discuss or brag about how large the local or national membership is.
 - Do not volunteer association information but if you are asked a question about your chapter, answer it if you can. If they start asking questions about the number of members or the National organization, refer them to your local CVMA Chain of Command.
23. Do not touch or sit on a MC patch-holder’s bike unless invited to do so. Do not expect the invitation.
 24. An MC probate and/or prospect can usually be identified by the back patch 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 specific clubs patch-holders know who they are. You want to treat them or even someone you suspect is a probate or prospect the same way you would treat a full-patch member – with respect and courtesy.
 25. Be aware of the behavior and attitude of the other CVMA members who are with you (especially if anyone has been drinking) at events. If necessary, try to take action to avoid problems before they happen. For example, if someone appears to be getting too angry, loud or possibly disrespectful, take them aside or suggest going somewhere else until things settle down. You could also let your local CVMA Chain of Command know about the situation. If an incident should occur in spite of your best efforts when no Chapter Officers are present, make sure to let them know as soon afterward possible. If no club officers happen to be there, then all of the CVMA members that are there need to make the attempt to take that person aside, and strongly suggest that the offending CVMA member go somewhere else to settle down.
 26. Have absolutely no doubt that an MC is serious and many have been known to physically educate a person who shows disrespect or displays a bad attitude.
 27. 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.

28. The term Brother or Bro has special meaning to an MC patch-holder; do not call a patch-holder Brother or Bro. Their Brothers are fellow patch-holders and those that have earned that term.
29. Never use the term “outlaw club” when speaking to any member of any MC.
30. Don’t ever touch any part of another club member’s colors, which includes the vest or jacket it’s sewn on. That is considered a serious form of disrespect, which could cause them to aggressively educate the un-informed.
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32. While in public places, always conduct yourself with the CVMA in mind. Remember that whatever you do, people will remember . . . good or bad.

Appendix A

Glossary

AMA – American Motorcycle Association. Founded in 1924, the association focuses on motorcyclists’ rights and safety related issues.

ABATE – An organization started by EasyRider Magazine to fight against discrimination toward motorcyclists, mostly helmet laws originally. Once represented American Brotherhood Against Totalitarian Acts. Now ABATE has many other names from state to state such as American Brotherhood (or Bikers) Aimed toward Education. Now fighting rights many issues well beyond helmet laws, and often helping charities.

Back-Patch – The official “attire” of MCs usually consisting of a sleeveless denim or leather vest with a club patch sewn on the back. See 1, 2 and 3-Piece Patch.

Chain of Command – The CVMA chain of command is a two-way line of authority and responsibility along which communications are passed within the Association. It is essential that clear reporting relationships exist between the appointed/elected members who are responsible for communicating information, providing direction and delegating authority and responsibility.

CoC – The Confederation of Clubs stated mission is to facilitate unity within the motorcycle community. The CoC exists to bring communication through clubs, improve the motorcyclist image, support legislation for the betterment of motorcycling and allow clubs to come to a neutral spot where issues can be discussed. They monitor and protect the rights of biker in the court system. In some areas the CoC may also be a sanctioning body for new or probate clubs in that region.

Colors – Colors are the insignia worn by individuals of a specific organization to identify membership. Club patches have been worn by many different groups but have become largely synonymous with MCs. Colors are considered to represent "significant markers of the socialization" of new members to clubs, rank and present a dominant symbol of identity and marked with related symbolism. The primary symbol being of the "back-patch" which is the clubs’ colors. Wearing such clothing is referred to as "flying one's colors." Wearing your Colors as the operator or passenger of an automobile is viewed as a sign of disrespect.

Cube Shape – An oblique-angled parallelogram having four equal sides with four 90° angles and displayed with the diagonal line from one corner to the opposite corner oriented vertically (see example below).



Cut / Cuts – A denim jacket with the sleeves cut off (that's why it's called a “cut”) with the club's colors sewn on the back. It may also be a leather vest or jacket.

Diamond Shape – An oblique-angled parallelogram having four equal sides with no 90° angles and displayed with the longest diagonal line from one corner to the opposite corner oriented vertically (see example below).



Dominant Club – An MC that exerts an overwhelming governing influence over the motorcycle community within a specific region/state. Dominate clubs have a vested interest in ensuring that undue attention is not focused upon the biker activities within their territory

Flashes Patch – Generic patches usually sold at swap meets and shops.

Freedom Fighter – An MRO member dedicated to preserving or gaining our rights.

Get-Back Whip / Whip / Cracker – A hand-braided, full grain leather whip with a rope core that can be attached directly to a quick release (aka – panic snap). It hangs from either the brake or clutch lever of a motorcycle, usually on the side of the rider's dominant hand. Today, whips are used mainly for aesthetic reasons but, like most things, they have a story of their own. Get-Back Whips were usually made with the 1% MC colors and, besides showing club support, could be quickly released and used to swing at anything that was causing a threat to the biker, hence the name "Get-Back Whip. Due to their construction and classification as a "Slugshot Weapon," a large number of states have statutes or ordinances governing them. The range of enforcement, depending on the state and circumstances, includes monetary fines to the possibility of jail time and it can be either a misdemeanor or a felony.

H.O.G. – Harley Owners Group.

Independent Rider – Someone not affiliated with any club or group, but normally a part of the biker community and culture.

LEO – Law Enforcement Officer/Official.

MC – Motorcycle Club.

MM – Motorcycle Ministry.

MRO – Motorcycle Rights Organization. An organization such as ABATE, BOLT, Motorcycle Riders Foundation or American Motorcycle Association. Having as part of their agenda to protect the rights and freedoms of motorcyclists. Overseas MAG and FEMA are the biggest MRO's.

MSF – Motorcycle Safety Foundation.

NCOM – The goal and purpose of The National Coalition of Motorcyclists (NCOM) is to assist all motorcycle organizations and individual riders with legal, legislative and other motorcycling issues. The Coalition will not dictate to any organization, but will be available to assist NCOM member groups through such free services as legislative assistance, nationwide information network, public awareness programs, safety projects, loan program and biker anti-discrimination legal and legislative assistance.

Nomad – A Nomad in an MC has authority delegated by the National President to enforce club rules and behavior. Most club members wear a territorial rocker (i.e., the bottom patch on the back of the jacket or vest) which signifies what city or state their chapter is located in. A Nomad's territorial rocker, however, will simply say "Nomad". This means that they hold no particular allegiance to a specific club chapter, but should be respected and accepted club wide. For example, if the National President had a problem with a specific club chapter, he might dispatch a group of Nomads to visit the chapter. The Nomads would then observe the chapter and advise the members of any problems the National President may have. If the infractions were not corrected, the Nomads might then have the authority to correct the problem. Since the Nomads are not official members of a specific club chapter, they must be received, housed and fed by any chapter where they may currently be located. They are essentially members of all chapters. There is no such designation for anyone within the CVMA.

Ol' Lady – A non-derogatory term used within the motorcycle community for a female companion, wife or girlfriend.

OMC – Outlaw Motorcycle Club was originally the term designated a motorcycle organization that was not a chartered member of the AMA. Today, the term defines any club that has a 3-piece patch. By definition, all 1% clubs are outlaw motorcycle clubs, but not all outlaw motorcycle clubs are 1% clubs.

Out in Bad Standing / Out Bad – A term for a club member whose membership has been terminated by his club. This is typically because they have violated club protocol and/or broken established rules. The brand is used to keep former members from joining other MCs. Anyone who has been deemed "out in bad standing" should be ostracized and shunned by the entire motorcycle community. Any association and/or connection with someone who is "out in bad standing" is a sign of disrespect to this individual's former club and may be appropriately dealt with.

Patch – The club colors of any MC. A patch can be the entire vest with the colors sewed on it or in can just refer to the club colors by themselves.

Patch-holder – A member of an MC who wears the distinctive club patch(s) on his jacket or vest.

“Property Of” Patch – A patch used in motorcycle cultures to patch predominantly female members who do not qualify for membership in the organization, and to identify the relationship between a member and his wife or girlfriend. Referred to as "Ol' Ladies" and other regional labels, they are extremely popular within 1% MCs.

RC – Riding Club.

Rags – Also used to refer to colors. In some areas it's used only when referring to a woman's colors.

Road-Name – Also known as handle or nickname. Name given to someone by his Brothers/Sisters/friends. Usually given after some kind of incident or something they would associate with that person.

Rocker – A Rocker is defined as any item, including but not limited to, a patch, direct embroidery, direct printing, sublimation, heat transfer, iron-on or hand drawn rendered in the shape of an arc, either upward or downward. Part of MC colors which usually designates geographic location, territory or MC position/rank.

SMRO – State Motorcycle Rights Organization. Same as a MRO except defined by the state they operate in that respective state. Such as ABATE of Ohio, ABATE of MN, BOLT of CA, ABATE of CA, TMRO, ABATE of PA. Most often associated with National MROs such as AMA and MRF. However working on a state level, with state government to protect motorcyclist's rights and freedoms. Many meet at MRF and AMA functions to discuss issues, strategies, and other helpful information.

Soft-Colors – A T-shirt, sweat shirt or any article of clothing with the club's colors or logo printed on the back. Keep in mind that if you're wearing CVMA patch designs, images or logos you are representing the CVMA.

Turn Your Back – To completely disassociate from a person or club.

US Defenders – The US Defenders are composed of members from every state CoC and their COIR representatives. The US Defenders program is not a Motorcycle Rights Organization (MRO) but manageable units of MCs and Independent Riders manpower. They stand ready to implement and support motorcycle rights organizations and other organization's "Call-to-Actions" that are identified as falling within each CoC's agenda.

XXF-FXX / XXFOREVER – FOREVERXX – Patch worn by MC members to represent their total commitment to the club and every other member of that club. (XX stands for the name of the club).

1%er / One-percenter – As the “legend” goes, the term 1% comes from the annual AMA Gypsy Tour event and races on July 4, 1947, in Hollister, California.

Members of the Boozefighters MC and POBOBs (Pissed Off Bastards of Bloomington) made the headlines with an extremely sensationalized story in *Life* magazine. The AMA wrote an article in their magazine shortly after the episode denouncing these bikers stating "99 percent of all of our members are law-abiding, god fearing and family oriented citizens and only 1 percent were anti-social barbarians, the rough element and outlaws." Thus the terms “1%er” and “outlaw biker” was born. Some of the early bikers embraced the term and decided to call themselves 1%er’s and display it on a cube or diamond shaped patch.

1-Piece Patch – A one-piece patch, normally a custom patch comprised of an emblem, traditionally worn on the back of a vest, represents a family club, riding club, or social motorcycle club. One piece back patches are generally accepted and approved, unless the patch displays stolen logos or those that are similar to the local MC.

2-Piece Patch – A two-piece patch can have many different meanings but usually signifies a club in some sort of transition. It can mean that the members are awaiting approval from the area's dominant club to become a sanctioned MC and earn the right to wear a three-piece patch.

3-Piece Patch – A three-piece patch normally signifies that the group is a traditional 1% club. They are worn with the top rocker showing the club name, the middle showing the club's official insignia or colors and the bottom rocker showing their territory or their geographical location. Additionally, a small MC patch is normally located to the side of the main patch. There are also a few 3-piece patch clubs where the bottom rocker has something other than territory, such as a saying. The traditional MC is one that adheres to the protocols and traditions that have long been established. There are a few exceptions including veterans, firefighters, and Christian groups. To keep it simple, a three-piece patch should only be worn by established MC's. A three-piece patch is a public sign of commitment to a particular MC's protocols and lifestyle, and therefore, MC's take them very seriously! Wearing colors that resemble a 3-piece patch without permission from the dominate MC could turn out incredibly bad.

Note: The above information pertaining to 1-Piece, 2-Piece and 3-Piecs Patches is the normal accepted practice. Be advised that there are some 1% MC's that wear either the 1-Piece or 2-Piece Patch as well.

"13" – The number thirteen is a common patch worn by MC bikers and can have several meanings. The most common held meaning is its being the 13th letter of the alphabet "M" and stands for Marijuana or Meth. It's also known to stand for the original or "Mother" chapter of an MC. In the last few years, many places are saying the "M" stands for Motorcycle.