



Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association
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 a motorcycle club patchholder. If you are FORMALLY introduced to an MC patchholder, make sure either the person doing the introduction (or you) know what association 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 till the introduction is done, then politely introduce yourself correctly. i.e.....

Joe Rider, Combat Veterans Motorcycle Assn., Any town.

Fred Spokes, State Rep., Combat Veterans Motorcycle Assn., Any town.

(Use your name - not your nickname. Nicknames may come later.)

3. Greet them as you would meet anyone else and 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 club 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 association is about. Such as....

- A.) "We are the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association & not a motorcycle club and have no intention of ever trying to become a motorcycle club".
- B.) Our Patch is earned by being a Combat Veteran.
- C.) We pay small yearly dues that is used to benefit veteran issues.
- D.) All makes and models of motorcycle are welcomed in the CVMA.
- E.) We are a non-territorial association and wear nothing signifying territory.
- F.) We are a neutral association and do not wear any MC support patches.
- G.) Women riders are welcome and are welcomed as full members if they have served in harms way in one of our military branches.
- H.) Do not offer forum links or web sites, it's better to refer them to a CVMA officer.
- I.) Do NOT brag about how large the local or national membership is.
- J.) Do not volunteer association info. 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. Most clubs realize that the CVMA is like a riding club, for the most part. When approached, be aware that most patch holders will want to deal with the local or state representatives.

6. If anyone knows a patchholder, don't let him/her throw the patchholders' name/nickname/club's name around like you're a great buddy of theirs (even if you are). Many 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". Patchholders do not always wear their colors. By the time the story gets back to the top club 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 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.

9. If for some reason you have to say something while in public about a motorcycle club, take the person you're 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 can't overhear it & misunderstand what you're talking about.



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10. Watch where you wear your patch and it's just common sense to stay in numbers when wearing the patch. (Some motorcycle clubs can be very territorial and some clubs don't see any difference between a RIDING CLUB and MOTORCYCLE CLUB, 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 THEM RESPECT." That's A #1 with them! (and worth repeating).

12. If you already know a patchholder, or get to know one in the future, don't just walk up to him/her and interrupt when they are with other members. Wait till he/she acknowledges you first and 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 at all, then just keep walking. If you need to talk to an officer of a Motorcycle Club the proper way is to go through the Sgt 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). But if you do go, then you also have to go to their rival clubs' function or you'll be telling everyone that you're 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're going too, so they're not in the dark and we can ALL stay on top of things.

***** NOTE ***** A better 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 your affiliation to the CVMA. Remember, if you're wearing your CVMA patch, 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 those rivals will see you as no longer being neutral & you could be considered a rival of theirs too.

14 No CLB's (Chapter Location Bars), any territory rockers, or anything giving the appearance of a rocker should be worn with the association patch. No State flags, state logos, no diamonds (front and back), cube shape or rockers to be worn on the back of your jacket. That could be taken as 1% MC/MC. Diamond shapes may be worn in some areas and not in others. It's best to check with your State Representative or Chapter officers to make sure of what is ok in your area.

15. If someone from a motorcycle club requests that you remove your vest/patch, don't argue. The best reply is, "No Problem" & politely take it off and let your CVMA Officer know what motorcycle club it was so they can deal with any potential problems. You normally will only get asked once.

16. If an establishment has a sign indicating "No Colors", even though your patch is not considered "colors", the vest should be removed out of respect to the other clubs and the policy of the establishment. While we may just be an association of combat veterans, it's only respectful to honor the house rules. Motorcycle clubs that honored the "house rules" would probably be deeply offended that you didn't. 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 a MC and a RC. Be aware of the local motorcycle club hangouts & it's best not to wear our CVMA patch into them without an invitation.



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17. Do not wear your Patch into a motorcycle club 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 motorcycle club, or been invited as a CVMA Member, to attend a function there.
18. In regard to women who are with a MC club, but not in the club: Old Lady is not a negative or derogatory term, it's just a slang term commonly used. "Property Of" patches are their way of showing support for their man and the club he's 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 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 motorcycle club 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 (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 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 Officers are present, make sure to let your officers know as soon afterward as you can. 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.
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. 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 serious disrespect, which could cause them to aggressively educate the un-informed.

Remember this is only a Basic protocol. "Golden rule" of conduct that you should bear in mind while traveling in club circles:

"SHOW THEM RESPECT" - "If you give respect, you will get respect. If you act like an asshole, you will be treated like an asshole"