Motorcycle Club (MC) 101

THE CLUB

The intent of this section is to give you an overview of the structure and philosophy of the Traditional Motorcycle Club (MC) basics. This does not necessarily express the feelings or priorities of any particular club, including this one; as all motorcycle clubs differ on some points, and we are not a Traditional Club. Regardless of the basic philosophy of this group, it is important that you understand the perspectives of other clubs that you may be associating with from time to time.

If motorcycles influence your lifestyle, then you are part of the motorcycle community. Of all the types of organizations found within that community, the traditional motorcycle club stands apart and ranks highest in stature.

RESPECT

A serious MC club commands respect for one reason. Those who are correctly informed recognize the deep level of personal commitment and self-discipline that a man has to demonstrate and sustain in order to wear a patch. They realize that a club’s “Colors” are closely guarded and the membership process is long and difficult. Other factors notwithstanding, they respect Patchholders for what they have accomplished by being able to earn and keep the patch they wear. This is respect born out of recognition of dedication and accomplishment. The MC Club strives for respect for this reason. This is especially true as it pertains to those persons outside of the motorcycle community. This segment of society is by far larger, and therefore represents a larger market for any fund raising activities that the group might undertake. It stands to reason that cultivating a relationship with these people is important, and to be perceived by them as “Biker Scum” would not be advantageous to the group. They will therefore conduct themselves as outstanding citizens in every way...”Good neighbors” so to speak. The goal is to be admired and respected by the general public rather that feared. The serious club, and all or its members and guests, will always conduct themselves publicly in a highly professional manner.

CLUB COLORS

The general public does not draw a distinction between different club colors. In many cases, they simply can’t tell the difference: we’re all “Biker Scum” to them. If one club causes a problem that touches the public sector, the offending club’s identity is either confused or ignored and the heat comes down on all clubs. The general public does not make the distinction between a Motorcycle Club (MC), a Riding Club (RC), or Motorcycle Ministry (MM), therefore EVERYONE needs to be aware that no matter whether they are in an MC, RC, MM, or an Independent (Lone Wolf) rider, their actions reflect on all in the motorcycle community. The MC clubs tend to police themselves to avoid such incidents.
PARTICIPATION

A patchholder will not discuss any club business whether it’s about membership numbers, club goings on, or any member’s personal information with anyone outside of the club. They understand that they are a Patchholder 24 hours a day whether or not they are wearing their colors. Everything they say or do in public can affect the club. They also understand that if they get out of line, that they are subject to be counseled for their own good and for that of the club. Wearing a patch is more than getting together for good times. It also means getting together for the other times, too. It constitutes a lot of work. It’s committing themselves to a lifestyle in which they do not look for how their brothers or sisters can help them, but for ways that they can be of help to their brothers and sisters. They always look to give rather than receive. All of this may seem very idealistic, and in some cases it’s just that. But it is an ideal that all clubs profess and are always striving for in principle and practice.

Always be aware of the “Golden Rule” of conduct while traveling in club circles: If you give respect, you’ll get respect. If you act with disrespect, then you’ll be treated with the same.

LEVELS OF COMMITMENT

When someone earns their patch, it does not mean that he or she has reached the ultimate goal and from that point on they can kick back and coast. Moving from guest to probation or prospect to Patchholder is not climbing from the bottom to the top, but rather more like climbing a constantly ascending slope, and in time becoming a stronger and more committed brother or sister. A person’s probationary rocker and later their patch are merely presented in recognition of what they have demonstrated along the way. In this fashion, the more senior the Patchholder is in the club and the more they experience, the more of a brother or sister they should be to all.

PURPOSE OF MC PROBATION / PROSPECTING

Probation is not an initiation, as you would find in a fraternity. It is instead a period of time that is sustained until the person, in every sense, conducts himself or herself with the respect that is mandated to be a Patchholder. It’s a time in which: The attitude is conditioned so that he/she displays a sense of responsibility and respect toward the patch holders of the club, without which they will not develop a sense of respect for the group. He/she is educated in MC protocol and etiquette. He/she is given time to develop the habits that are basic to good security and good communications. To get in to the habit of participating. To become accustomed to trusting the judgment, at times blindly, of those patch holders who will someday be his or her brothers and sisters.
The list could go on but the point here is to demonstrate that the probationary period has definite objectives and that a person will go nowhere in the club if he/she is not aware of this and does not apply themselves to those ends. It’s not possible to make a checklist of what is expected from a person in all cases. There isn’t any formula for success, but the key is ATTITUDE AND RESPECT. Everything else can be learned in time, but a person’s attitude comes from the heart.

BIKERS

While in public places always conduct yourself with your association with the your club in mind. Remember that what you do, people will remember, good or bad. The public perception of anyone who rides a motorcycle should be considered and a good attitude is always the kind of perception we should present.

Remember, in this day and age never let someone go off alone without someone keeping an eye them.

Never use the term “Outlaw Club” or any of the other names they are known by when speaking to strangers (you never know when one of them might be a member of an MC, be a support member or know members of an of an MC).

Never call a member of a motorcycle club (MC) “Brother” or “Bro”. If he is a friend and you two consider each other brothers, wait for MC Patchholder to address you as such in public.
These are some things for you, as a club members, that you need to consider when dealing with motorcycle clubs. Additionally, they are also some things you should consider if and when you are going to be around motorcycle clubs and their patchholders.

1. Motorcycle club Patchholders are people too. They have good days 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 (MC) patchholder.

If you are formally introduced to a MC patchholder, make sure either the person doing the introduction (or you) makes sure they know what you belong to, 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 and politely introduce yourself correctly. Remember to use your name – not your nickname it may come latter as you get know them better. Remember, it’s always polite to face the individual or group and make eye contact with who you are talking to.
3. Greet them, as you would meet anyone else and wait until the offer is made to shake hands or slap each other’s (Remember DO NOT EVER TOUCH a MC Members Patch unless they have extended the offer by slapping yours first) patch. DO NOT interrupt, wait for them to recognize you. DO NOT, be offended or make a big deal out of it if they do not offer to shake your hand. Many times they want to get to know more about you and your club or ministry a little before they will offer to shake your hand and most certainly before they will touch your patch and allow you to touch their patch.

4. Never, Ever, Lie. Never lie to anyone. Either answer the question or refer the questioner to someone who can. Be prepared to answer questions about what the club is all about. Such as…
   a. We want to provide an environment in which anyone with a love for being on two wheels can be a part of an organization with a desire to ride. To pursue, promote and protect the interests of motorcyclists; to develop better and more enthusiastic relations between the general public, the media and the operators and riders of motorcycles.
   b. We are not in “competition” with any MC club and we have no intention of ever trying to become a motorcycle club.
   c. We do not “claim” territories or wear territorial rockers.
   d. We are a “NEUTRAL” club.
   e. All makes and models of motorcycles.
   f. Women riders are welcomed.
   g. DO NOT brag about how large our international and/or national membership is.

5. Women, in leadership positions or being a patchholder in a motorcycle club, while not totally unheard of, are rare. That’s just the way it is. Most MC’s would rather deal with a man if there is business to conduct. Most motorcycle clubs (MC) realize what a motorcycle ministry (MM) or riding club (RC) is about and will for the most part accept a woman as an officer, and a motorcycle riding club “woman officer” will most likely be allowed to attend any meeting. Whether or not they will deal directly with a woman or not depends of the individual MC/Chapter. There is no set rule for this and they will let you know if it’s OK with them or not. Many MC’s do not care to deal with National Officers. They would prefer to deal the local or state representatives.

6. If anyone knows a motorcycle club patchholder, don’t throw the patchholder’s 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 motorcycle clubs, 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 (patch). 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 MC members is club business ONLY. If comments, even those said in a joking manner were to get out, problems could start. Discussions about or around any MC member or strangers outside the privacy of the club members can start rumors that could cause a lot of problems for not only the local 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 (MC), 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 standing near by can’t overhear it and misunderstand what you’re talking about.

10. Watch where you wear your patch (Motorcycle Ministries and Motorcycle Riding Clubs don’t wear colors, colors are earned, not bought). (Some MC’s can be very territorial and some clubs don’t see any difference between a MOTORCYCLE MINISTRY, RIDING CLUB, or MOTORCYCLE CLUB, good or bad.) If you are unsure of the areas or places normally frequented by MC’s, find out from your Chapter Counsel. If you are planning on traveling and are concerned about MC’s in the areas you’ll be traveling through or staying in, talk to your Chapter Counsel and ask if they can find something out by contacting the MC officers in the areas you will be in.

11. 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 MC 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 clubs Sergeant at Arms or one of their other patchholders.

12. 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 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 clubs” 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 their rival clubs’ function or you’ll be telling everyone that you’re not a “NEUTRAL” as you said you were. (Example: If you go to Club A’s function then YOU HAVE TO GO to Club B’s function, etc…) You have to decide how you want to stay neutral, by going or not 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 ministry 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 club. Remember, if you’re wearing your patch, you are considered by everyone to be representing the whole Club. If anything were to turn sour, then your whole club 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 and you could be considered a rival of theirs too.

13. No “Chapter Location Bars” (CLB’s), No “Territory Rockers”, or anything giving the appearance of a rocker should be worn with the Club patch. State flags, state logos may be worn in some areas and not in others. It’s best to check with the local Chapter counsel to make sure what is OK in your area.

14. If someone from a MC requests that you remove your vest/patch, don’t argue. The best reply is, “No Problem” and politely take it off and let your Chapter Elder know what MC it was so they can deal with any potential problems. You normally will only get asked once.

15. If an establishment has a sign indicating “No Colors”, even though your patch is not considered “colors”, your vest or jacket should be removed out of respect to the other motorcycle clubs and the policy of the establishment. While you may just be part of a Motorcycle Riding Club, it’s only respectful to honor the house rules. Motorcycle clubs that honored the “house rules” would likely be deeply offended that you didn’t do the same. 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, RC, or a MM. Be aware of the local MC hangouts and it’s best not to wear your Club patch into them without an invitation.

16. Do not wear your Club Patch into a MC clubhouse unless you have asked if it’s OK to do so or have been invited as a Club Member, to attend a function there.

17. 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. AND please remember, a man in the MC world is judged along side the manners of his woman. Keep her in check. It not her ass she’s putting on the line it’s her man’s that will be in jeopardy.

18. A MC patchholder may not, and many times will not acknowledge your wife or girlfriend, especially upon a first meeting and this should be understood ahead of time to avoid any problems.

19. DO NOT touch or sit on a patchholder’s bike unless invited to do so. Do not expect the invitation.
20. A prospect can usually be identified by the back patch they are wearing. There are many different ways MC’s 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.

21. Have absolutely no doubt that a motorcycle club (MC) is serious and many have been known to physically educate a person who shows disrespect or displays a bad attitude toward them.

22. Be aware of the behavior and attitude of the other club members who are with you (especially if anyone has been drinking “REFER to attached WCC Policy on public consumption of alcohol”) at events. If necessary, try to take action to avoid problems before they happen. For example if someone is getting too angry or loud and possibly disrespectful, take them aside or suggest going somewhere else until things settle down. If other WCC members are in the area you should explain the situation to them and all of you should attempt to take the person aside, and strongly suggest that they go somewhere else and settle down. If an incident should occur in spite of your efforts, make sure to let your Chapter Counsel know about it as soon afterward as you can.

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

24. The term “Brother” of “Bro” has special meaning to a MC Patchholder, do not call a MC Patchholder Brother or Bro. Their Brothers are fellow MC Patchholders and those that have earned that term.

What is a “Brother” in the MC world? Once you’re gone through the hangaround period, the members of the club have viewed your behavior, your attitude, your dedication, trust and loyalty, to be there. If you’ve actually completed this period, then you may be asked to become a prospect. During this time you are put under a much more intense review. You and the other members of the club find out if you are suited to be part of the club and if you can accept the other members as Brothers just as much as if they can accept you and call you Brother. Can you dedicate yourself to the others as close as you would to your own flesh and blood? Many times it is an even closer commitment than family. The person you call Brother becomes family as a part of his as well as being a part of theirs. A common phrase used in MC circles is “I am my brother’s keeper”. This means you will support him and help him in any way you can, sometimes to the point of selling your bike to help him, quitting your job to go help him and, in some cases, Brothers have even done things that they already know could get them put in jail because they were willing to take that step to help a Brother out.
Please take note if you haven’t had any experience being around some of the more serious motorcycle clubs (1%ers, support clubs, etc…), they take the word “Brother, or Bro” very seriously, and they’ll only use the word as a show of respect towards their own club, their members, and any club who they’ve bestowed that word upon. And if a MC club overhears someone throwing around the word “Brother, or Bro” lightly within their midst, it could cause them to aggressively educate those whom they feel disrespected them by abusing the word. Next time you feel the need to call someone “Brother, or Bro”, just what is behind it? Commitment or just trying to sound cool?

25. Don’t ever touch any part of another MC 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 uninformed.

26. MC’s tend to police their own, and don’t take kindly to interference from the so-called establishment enforcers. Yes they live by a law. Simply put You Mess with one, You Mess with all. But as long you live and ride the streets as they do you have little to fear from MC’s unless you let your mouth overload your rear. “SHOW THEM RESPECT.” That’s A #1 with them!