

## **Terms, Protocols and Philosophy's of the MC World as they relate to the Chapters of the Red Knights International Motorcycle Club ®**

The following pages are written definitions and accepted protocols that members of RKMC® should understand. The purpose of these pages is to assist our membership in better understanding the THREE PIECE PATCH MC world in which we ride. Unlike most Motorcycle Clubs (MC's), our club has limited participation requirements, but it is important to understand how the rest of the MC world got their patch. In most states, we have been given the true MC status because of the steps we have taken to work within protocols. Due to our public servant status, we also have another [higher] set of protocols that we have committed to. All firefighters are prospective members, if they ride, but they are not Prospects. Each chapter will handle internal business. Hazing and the likes are not part of RKMC® requirements. Probation for the Active and Social members is not allowed. Probationary status of Associate members is spelled out in our Bylaws. Our rights to wear this patch come from our commitment to public service and the hazards of our chosen trade and the physical demands of the job.

In the motorcycle world, there are different organizations established. There are Ride Groups, Associations, Riding Clubs, etc. Within this community, the traditional MC stands apart and ranks highest in stature.

There is a natural hierarchy that is recognized between motorcycle clubs. The strongest and most established MC assumes charge of the particular state in which they ride. This dominant club, for reasons beneficial to all, may establish basic policy within the state such as, which MC's will fly colors, what is acceptable wording, etc. These dominant clubs maintain peace between other MC's and may be called upon to mediate disputes as needed. They may step in and stop a club's activity that they view as harmful or negative to the state as a whole. They may even shut down the club all together if they continually cause trouble. On the other hand, for clubs that follow protocol, the dominant club may provide some protection from troublesome clubs that may wish to establish themselves at your expense. Dominant clubs may recruit from junior clubs and some MC's have been established for that purpose. These "Support Clubs" are committed to supporting the needs of the dominant club.

Most MC's are paramilitary in structure with strict discipline requirements. They have a "Club first mentality" that is taken as seriously as a religion. Punishment for violating club rules is swift. Physical punishment, monetary fines, extra work duties, etc. may be acceptable forms of discipline. They have a strictly adhered to chain of command.

The general public does not draw a distinction between club colors. To avoid being put in the "Biker Scum" category, most clubs police themselves to prevent unwanted negative incidents with **Citizens**. (See glossary definitions for bold print)

### Membership process in a Motorcycle Club

You cannot simply join most traditional MC's. The first step in the process is that of **Acquaintance**. This may take a long time before you obtain this level and then accepted to the next level, which is **Hang around**. You may maintain this status for up to a year before you are accepted enough to bump up to the next level. Depending on the needs, standards of the club, and your conduct, you may never get to or beyond either level. If all goes well, you will be given an official invitation to **Prospect**. After completion of this long and demanding process, you can bump up to a **Probationary Patch Holder**. The Probationary member has, for the most part, the

same privileges of a Full Patch Holder. He is still closely watched and may have to closely follow his **Sponsor** until he has completed his path to being a Full Patch Holder. A Probationary Patch Holder may hold an office within his chapter. This is more common where new chapters have been formed. As a **Full Patch Holder**, the member can't kick back and relax in his newly found position. His life long journey has just begun. He may now be expected to hold an office in the chapter, the state or eventually within the national (or international depending on the size of the club). He will still have daily duties that may occupy much of his time. These duties include sponsoring new members, educating other clubs on protocols, participating in club meetings, State **Confederation of Clubs** meetings, **Runs**, etc.

Some background on 1%er MC and starting a new MC

In the world of 1%ers, a back patch is earned. It cannot be bought. Lives are laid on the line to defend the patch, or any brother wearing the same patch. That world demands, and gets, unquestioned loyalty. A Full Patch Holder in one of the major clubs may be a 'til death do us part' kind of thing. These clubs have definite territories that they will defend.

They do allow other patches in their territory, even from another 1%er MC, but only after respectful requests for transit through their territory or a visit to the territory have been made.

It takes a lot of work to get a new MC's patch recognized by dominant clubs. Usually the President of the new MC works the phone, attends COC (Confederation of Clubs) meetings, and makes personal visits to the dominant clubs to introduce himself. His new patch is submitted for approval PRIOR to it being used in public. It is a time consuming task fraught with roadblocks and 'tests'.

That is the old tradition, well established, and recognized by those that have been around more than a few decades in the MC world. If an MC member wearing his club's patch pulls some fool stunt that is interpreted as aggressive or disrespectful to another MC, then ALL the aggrieved MC's members usually interpret that as a 'club action', and ALL the members of the other club are held accountable unless some very swift and very effective negotiations take place to sort that out. That is one way an MC member can have his own club rip his patch off and boot him out the door.

Now there are back patches that are pretty well ignored. If someone wears a big HONDA patch on their back, they will very seldom encounter any problems, unless they are stupid enough to walk into a 1%er bar and start slapping PHs (Patch Holders) on their 'colors'. You don't touch a PHs colors, even in greeting, unless you know he will accept such an act. Just because he is riding a motorcycle does not mean he is your 'brother'. Stand apart...wait for an invitation...don't rush up and start hugging and slapping him on the back and calling him 'brother'.

But there are those out there who don't understand the MC world. They slap on a back patch and begin to dress as if they were members of an MC. Sometimes they get hurt. Sometimes they are just humiliated and wind up getting their store bought patch cut off with a sharp knife. During that process, any attempt to resist may result in something much worse.

As you can see, there is a strong organization within a MC. You can see what some Patch holders have gone through to 'earn' their status. As a Patch holder, other PH's expect you to know what they went through because they assume you have done the same to earn the right to wear your patch. Being a Patch holder in an MC is an honor not to be taken lightly. The **Independent** rider will look up to you. You will be considered as an 'equal' by some MC PH's. You will be looked at with curiosity and, in some cases, disdain by the new, casual, or 'wannabe'

bikers that are out there. You will be watched! Your actions reflect on the Club as a whole. This is why the RKMCM expects the behavior of its members to be above reproach. Remember, you are a Red Knight 24 hours a day. Remember the Golden Rule of conduct while traveling in Club Circles: **If you give respect, you'll get respect. If you act like a jerk, you'll be treated like one.**

### **Some Do's and Don'ts.**

- Strive to conduct yourself as a responsible Patch holder at all times.
- Always display a positive attitude.
- If you see a Red Knight that you don't know, introduce yourself. Introduce yourself to PH's of other clubs.
- Always show respect to PH's of other Clubs.
- If you need to speak to PH's of another club that are in a private conversation, put yourself in a place of visibility and wait to be acknowledged. Do not rudely interrupt.
- Never use the term "Outlaw Club or Gang" when speaking to members of another Club.
- Use the term "Brother" cautiously when speaking to a PH of another Club. You may get told very quickly that you are not his brother.
- At a public function, never turn your back on a PH of another Club. This may be seen as disrespectful.
- Show respect to PH's of other Clubs. Don't come across like you want to be everyone's best friend. Just be professional, brief and move on. This is especially true when meeting members of 1%er Clubs or their Support Clubs.
- Keep away from women that wear "Property of" Patches These women belong to members of another Club and are not worth the trouble that follows.
- Always carry a pen and notepad. Business cards are excellent tools to maintain and use when meeting RK Club brothers and other Club PH's.
- When group riding with multiple clubs, there may a line up by order based on the Dominant Club first, their Support Clubs, all other 3 Piece Patch Clubs based on that clubs standing, then Riding Clubs, Ride Groups, Associations, etc. If you're not sure where your chapter should line up, ask the Road Captain or hosting club in charge of the run.
- Always be security minded when out on a run or even a casual ride with your brothers. Watch out for your stuff and theirs.

The following is a glossary of traditional terms used in the MC world.

**Acquaintance** -Someone that is well known by the Club, usually for a fairly long period of time. This is step one in the membership process. The next step is "Hang Around".

**Citizens** -Those outside the motorcycling community.

**Confederation of Clubs** – An organization that promotes biker rights. Many clubs within each state may belong. This organization promotes harmony with the state between MC's.

**Good Standing** -A member in good standing in the club is in approval of his Club Brothers and maintains all rights and privileges within that club.

**Hang around** – Someone who has been an “Acquaintance”, but has been raised a notch and who has been permitted into a more personal relationship. They are expected to ‘hang around’ the club and its members for a period of time, up to a year, maybe more. This allows club members to gauge whether they want to let him in. The next step is “Prospect”.

**Independent Rider** – A member of the motorcycling community that is not affiliated with a MC, Ride Club, Group, Association, etc.

**Patch holder or Full Patch holder** – MC member that has full rights as a member and is in good standing. He is an equal among his peers.

**Probationary Patch Holder** - The Probationary member has, for the most part, the same privileges of a Full Patch Holder following his promotion up from Prospect. As he is further evaluated and expected to complete additional training, he may be given Full Patch holder status.

**Prospect** – A Hang around moves to Prospect when the Club thinks he is ready. He will be given an invitation that this new member must not take lightly. During this period, he usually wears a portion of the Club Colors, and possibly a PROSPECT rocker. This period may last up to a year, maybe more. The member is closely watched and given tasks to perform. Full members will test him to gauge his worthiness. The next step is “Probationary Patch Holder”.

**Run** – A club event or ride. Charity ride, Poker Run...etc.

**Sponsor** – The PH that is responsible for introducing and training a Prospect.

This by no means everything you ever needed to know about MC's. This is intended to be a brief overview of some of the terms, protocols and philosophies of a majority of the traditional MC's. Your actions as a PH are paramount to the continued recognition and credibility of the Red Knights Motorcycle Club.

Please research if there is a COC (**Confederation of Clubs**) in the area where a new chapter is being formed, we suggest that you contact the RKMC Club Liaison Consultant, Dallis Johnson, to be advised on joining or making contact with the COC before you start the process of starting a new chapter. Any new or existing chapter needing help concerning wearing of our colors or questions in dealing with other MC clubs should contact Dallis at [dallis@rkmca11.com](mailto:dallis@rkmca11.com) or 334-361-3274.