

What's the Deal with Motorcycle Clubs and Three-Piece Patches?

Organized motorcycle clubs are recognized by their “colors” (motorcycle patches worn on their vests), in some areas these are also called “cuts.”

While many motorcycle patch varieties exist, they can be categorized into three basic groups.

The **one-piece patch**: This is a single patch comprised of a club's insignia, traditionally worn on the back of a vest, that usually designates the member of a family club or riding club--not a traditional “MC.”



The **two-piece patch**: This type of patch usually signifies a club in some sort of transition. It can mean that the club is awaiting approval from the area's dominant club to become a sanctioned “MC” and earn the right to wear a three-piece patch.

The **three-piece patch**: This style of patch is worn to signify a true “MC” club. Traditionally, this patch is earned by members in three parts. While practices vary from club to club, the most common practice is for a “prospect,” who has been sponsored by an existing member of the club, to first wear the club’s bottom rocker indicating where the club is from. Next, the prospect will earn the top rocker bearing the name of the club and finally the club’s full insignia in the center. A three-piece patch is a public sign of commitment to a club’s protocols and lifestyle, and therefore, MC’s take them very seriously!

If you are a motorcycle enthusiast and are planning on starting a motorcycle club, here are a few important considerations to keep in mind.

1. Check around your area to see if an existing club is a good fit before starting your own. There are now hundreds of clubs across the country devoted to military veterans, firefighters, police, American Legion members, and many more.
2. If you are a casual riding group that is forming a riding club or “RC,” a one-piece patch can be fun to design and shouldn’t invite any negative attention from other clubs, as long as the design and colors aren’t a rip off of an existing club.

3. If you choose to design a three-piece patch, you should ask around your local area (motorcycle shops, biker bars etc.) or attend a Motorcycle Rights Association meeting and determine how to obtain permission to become a sanctioned club from the local dominant club. The local dominant club will, in most places, be a “1%” club, meaning they are an “outlaw” club not chartered by the American Motorcycle Association. Dominant MC’s have learned that bad publicity from one club can have negative effects on all clubs in an area, that is why they take it upon themselves to sanction the forming of new three-piece patch wearing MC’s.
4. Wearing a three-piece patch with the “MC” badge may bring your club unwanted attention from law-enforcement who treat many MC’s as gangs.
5. Once you hire Stadri Emblems to make custom patches for your club, that patch becomes your club’s design and cannot be sold or worn by others without a club member’s permission. You can be sure that the finished product will be a motorcycle patch that you can wear with pride.