

# 1% Motorcycle Clubs in the ER



*Beyond the Leather and Patches*

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# Disclaimer

No conflicts of interest.

No affiliation to any motorcycle club or  
organization.

This is not a lecture about fearing bikers. Instead, it is about recognizing culture, preserving neutrality, and preventing avoidable conflict in the emergency department.

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# Objectives

Define the meaning of “1% motorcycle club” and how it differs from other motorcycle groups.

Identify possible visual indicators associated with 1% motorcycle clubs.

Describe the potential risks posed by rivalries and strict club codes in the ED setting.

Apply safety and communication strategies with motorcycle club members in the emergency department.

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Real-Life

Level 1 trauma;

Motorcyclist found on ground and initially  
unresponsive;

Unknown mechanism;

Clothes are cut off by EMS;

Arrives combative and yelling “You cut my s\$%t  
off!!!!”

Various body tattoos.

Solid black diamond with “1%”

“XFFX”



Me: “We’ve got a problem. He’s somebody important.”

Trauma Attending: “I don’t give a \$%^%& who he is!”

Me: “You will in about two minutes.”

Call to Security: “He has 1% diamond on his hand.”

Security: “Aww f\$%k! On the way!”

Security and County Police already present

Contained to Waiting Room

Sgt at Arms identified himself from group

Took Sgt. to see patient

Calmed remainder of members

Took patients clothing (very appreciative)

04

What is a 1%er?

Stemmed from Hollister California

Riots in 1947.

Unverified statement “99% of  
motorcyclists are law-abiding citizens.”

Implied remaining 1% were outlaws.



Adopted the 1% diamond patch  
as a symbol of pride and  
defiance.

Built around brotherhood,  
loyalty, and independence.

Start as “Hang around.”

Probationary period known as “Prospecting” (months to years).

May want to “prove themselves” to the club.

Prospects get the same respect as full members.

Structure:

President, Vice President

Road Captain, Secretary, Treasurer

**Sergeant-at-Arms: responsible for club internal order and discipline. May serve as primary point of contact**

## Support clubs

Smaller 1% clubs that support larger 1% clubs

Usually wear same color scheme as larger club

For every 1%, there may be several support clubs

## Other types of MC's that are not 1% clubs:

LEMC- Law Enforcement

Military

RC – Riding Club

Ethnicity

Owners Groups (HOG,  
BMW)

Women Only

Firefighters

Medical (EMS, MD, Nurses)

Religious

Bikers Against Child Abuse

## 3% Patch

Historical claim that only 3% of American colonists took up arms against the British during the American Revolution.

Making a **pro-Second Amendment**  
**/ anti-government statement**

The background is a dark, almost black, marbled paper with intricate, light-colored veins and patterns. A thin white border frames the entire image. In the center, the number '05' is displayed in a white, serif font, enclosed within a white square border.

05

The Cut

Motorcycle Cut or “Kutte.”

Denim or leather sleeveless vest.

Returning veterans “cut “ the sleeves off military jackets to stay cool while riding.

Symbolizes affiliation, commitment, brotherhood and ranking.

Most meaningful item they own (more than bike  
itself).

Represents identity.

Think about the emotions of cutting off wedding ring,  
or having your RN license taken away.

Treated with profound respect.

May be passed down from family or fallen members.

Patches symbolic to certain time and events  
(irreplaceable).

May be buried with or burned upon death of  
member.

If you must “cut-the-cut”

At least say, “I need to cut your vest.”

If possible, have them or another member remove  
the vest.

Cut around the patches.

Cut at the seams or laces.

Extra few seconds of respect can  
save *a lot* of trouble, and earn  
respect.

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Things to Think About

Why does this distinction matter ?

1% club rivalries outside of the ER can spill into the ER.

May become irate with LE presence.

Strict adherence to hierarchy

Protect their own – will want to remain present with injured member.

Knowing what to look for can prevent chaos

Designate one person to speak with a club spokesperson (President, Sergeant).

Never ask “Are you in a motorcycle gang?”

Give respect, get respect (things will go much smoother).

Follow standard visitor limitation protocols early.

Coordinate early to have rival clubs transported to  
different hospitals.

Critically important to maintain situational awareness and keep ER as neutral ground.

Calm is smooth, smooth is fast.

Keeping calm = avoid tunnel-vision, keeps room calm.

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# Documentation

Quote all statements verbatim.

Stick to the facts.

Avoid using labels/affiliations unless relevant and  
objective.

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# Final Thoughts

Most encounters end just as any other patient.

Treat everyone with professional courtesy and respect.

Preparation and knowledge prevents chaos.

Assumptions change tone. Tone changes attitudes.