

# Civilian Marksmanship Program

*presents*



## A Guide on Forming a CMP Marksmanship Club



# **CIVILIAN MARKSMANSHIP PROGRAM**

## **Guide to Forming a Marksmanship Club**

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Cover Photo Courtesy of Dustin Ellermann and his Youth Marksmanship Camp

## Introduction

The Civilian Marksmanship Program believes this guide will help in the formation of marksmanship clubs throughout the United States. The basic paradigms contained in this publication will help answer many questions, bring order, and stimulate constructive club activity.

During the forming of a club member confusion seems to be a leading dynamic. The creation of this guide came out of working with clubs and focusing on limiting the problems that many clubs encountered. Most clubs in decline have flaws that stem from the confusion by members during the club formation phase. The terminology “get it right the first time” definitely applies and is of great importance. Mistakes during the early days of the club are difficult to remove or change once set in place.

With the use of the Civilian Marksmanship Program Guide to Forming a Marksmanship Club, club formation should be much easier, less confusing, and result in a well-defined, well-structured club. The “end result” organization should be one that the local community is proud of and happy to assist in the club’s proliferation.

We at the CMP wish complete success!

## History and Mission of the CMP

A 1903 Act of Congress established the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice. This Act led to the subsequent creation of the Civilian Marksmanship Program as a means of realizing the Board’s objective of teaching marksmanship skills to civilians. The original Civilian Marksmanship Program was, until 1996, administered by the Office of the Director of Civilian Marksmanship in the Department of the Army.





The current Civilian Marksmanship Program was created in 1996 when far-sighted federal legislation established the Corporation for the Promotion of Rifle Practice and Firearm Safety as a private, non-profit corporation responsible for the “supervision, oversight, and control of the Civilian Marksmanship Program.” The act transferred the mission and assets of the Department of the Army’s Office of the Director of Civilian Marksmanship to the new Corporation.

The original Civilian Marksmanship Program’s mission was to develop the marksmanship skills of civilians and youth. The program fostered the training of instructors by organizing the Annual National Matches that were first conducted at Sea Girt, New Jersey in 1903. The Matches moved to their present home at Camp Perry, Ohio, in 1907. Post World War II Civilian Marksmanship Program activities focused on promoting junior rifle training by loaning smallbore rifles and providing annual issues of ammunition and targets to junior clubs. A 1966 Department of the Army study (Arthur D. Little) praised the program for producing military recruits who were more likely to use their rifles in combat, better prepared to use their rifles effectively and more likely to become military combat leaders.

From its inception in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, a major function of the Civilian Marksmanship Program was to conduct the Annual “National Matches” that have become its tradition. In addition to competitions for a growing collection of “National Trophies,” the matches included Small Arms Firing Schools that taught thousands



A winning Iowa Rifle team at the 1913 Camp Perry Rifle Matches. They are shown with their trophy and scoreboards. The rifles are 1903 Springfields with Winchester A5 scopes.

Source: CMP Archives

of military and civilian marksmen to be rifle marksmanship instructors should they be needed in a time of national mobilization. The National Trophies are some of the most important and historic trophies that are awarded in any U. S. sports competition. Small Arms Firing Schools continue to be a vital means of providing marksmanship instruction to U. S. citizens.

By the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Civilian Marksmanship Program mission changed so that its primary emphasis was on youth development through marksmanship training.

When the “Corporation for the Promotion of Rifle Practice and Firearms Safety Act” was passed in 1996, it gave the Corporation these missions:<sup>1</sup>

- 1. The instruction of citizens of the United States in marksmanship.*
- 2. The promotion of practice and safety in the use of firearms, including the conduct of matches and competition in the use of those firearms.*
- 3. The award to competitors of trophies, prizes, badges, and other insignia.*
- 4. The provision of security and accountability for all firearms, ammunition, and other equipment under the custody and control of the Corporation.*
- 5. The issue, loan, or sale of firearms, ammunition, supplies, and equipment to eligible clubs, organizations and individuals.*
- 6. To give priority to activities that benefit firearms safety, training, and competition for youth and that reach as many youth participants as possible.*

Today, the Civilian Marksmanship Program is dedicated to using the proceeds from its sale of government-surplus rifles and other supplies to provide programs that fulfill its mission of teaching marksmanship and firearm safety to U. S. citizens and especially to American youth and to grow an endowment that will fund these programs in perpetuity.

<sup>1</sup> Title 36, U. S. Code

## Club Organization

The following is a list of steps to be used in the earliest stages of forming a club. The first step is to move from the “talking about” to the actual grouping of interested persons into some sort of structured group. The group should always have in mind safety and marksmanship concerning shooting sports. Once the group is formed, the first meeting can take place. During the first meeting a temporary chairman and officers should step forward and be confirmed by group census. Many questions will arise out of this first meeting and the chairman should do everything possible to answer or at least consider the validity of each question. After the questions from the first meeting are answered or held over, a date and time for the second meeting should be established. The second meeting should be concerned with held over questions, naming of the club, and the creation of the club bylaws. Subsequent meetings should establish permanent bylaws, club officers (to include the club president) and the establishment of financial structures, i.e. member dues, fundraising, etc. The identifying of club shooting interest, high power, shotgun, pistol, etc., should also be accomplished in later meetings. Another major decision that should be made after the initial club establishment is the leasing, renting, or purchasing of property for the establishment of a range for the conduct of marksmanship activities.

The establishment of a range by means of leasing, renting, or owning is crucial for the proliferation of the club. The range is the crucial element needed for club growth and a great symbol for club recognition. Range activity is another way for the membership to come together for a cohesive club function in addition to the club meeting.



Many clubs seek out leasing/rental agreements from state owned ranges, FOP ranges, and other privately owned ranges. Assessing the local political environment is crucial in seeking out a potential range location. Once the club is established and shows to the community its ability to involve youth in a productive safe activity, lobbying local politicians may not be such a difficult task concerning range logistics.

### **Organization Simplified:**

1. Grouping of interested persons in safety and marksmanship.
2. Have the first meeting.
3. Establish temporary chairmen and officers, answer questions.
4. Have the second meeting.
5. Answer more questions, name the club, and create club bylaws.
6. Establish permanent club bylaws, club officers, and financial structures.
7. Identify club shooting interest, high power, shotgun, pistol, etc.
8. Find a location for range use.

## **Club Name**

The name of the club should be simple and easy to remember. When naming the club, club members should think of tangible, memorable items when choosing a name. Association of the club name with a local geographic location is a good way of establishing club identity. The club name should be short so not to limit usage on patches, shirts, baseball caps, or trophies. Always keep in mind, good organizations are recognized by their initials, CMP, NRA, FOP, NWTF, USSF, IPSC, USPSA, etc. The club name is the first thing a potential new member sees or hears. First impressions are very important, so choose the club name carefully.

## **Club Bylaws**

The bylaws of the organization are the rules governing the administration and operation of the club. The bylaws are important and must be well written and fully understandable by club members. Bylaws should not include minor rules



that can be frequently changed. The bylaws, once written, must be presented and accepted by all current and future club members. The acceptance of the club bylaws is accomplished by a majority club vote by its current membership during the course of a meeting. The minutes of said meeting will contain the newly accepted bylaws for the posterity of the club. Future members should sign that they have read the club bylaws and understand said bylaws before individual membership is accepted.

Sample organizational bylaws are readily available through local libraries, Internet, CMP, and NRA. Provided below is a simplified set of bylaws provided by the Civilian Marksmanship Program.

**Sample:  
BYLAWS**

*Bylaws of the (Club Name)*

DATE: (12/15/04)

**Article I Name of Organization**

The name of this organization shall be the (club name) or may be alternatively addressed by the acronym (club initials).

**Article II Purpose**

The purpose of this club shall be threefold. First is to educate the (local) community as well as the general public on pro-firearms issues by providing visible leadership by example and through the dissemination of pertinent information. Second is to promote the safe and responsible use of all types of firearms and range equipment by facilitating formal and informal classes. Third is to promote the safe enjoyment of all areas of shooting sports by facilitating formal and informal shooting activities.

**Article III Membership**

Section 1. Membership in (club) is open to the entire United States: without regard to age (except as stipulated by law), ethnic origin, gender, physical

ability, race, religious or sexual preferences. Members may join or resign from the club by notifying the club Secretary or other designated party of their intent. The only benefit granted to members is inclusion on (range name, if applicable) range usage list.

Section 2. Members and their respective guests may attend meetings and participate in club activities. However, only members may make or act on any motions or cast votes in any elections.

Section 3. The membership may by simple quorum vote, expel any member whose conduct grossly violates any of the club purposes, especially the safe and responsible handling of firearms.

Section 4. An annual membership fee of \$(amount) per member shall be assessed. However, members may vote to require additional fees by those participating in such club activities that incur expenses.

#### **Article IV Officers**

Section 1. The officers of this club shall consist of the President, Vice-President, and Secretary/Treasurer.

Section 2. Candidates for office must be able to clear a complete background check.

Section 3. All club officers must be members in good standing.

Section 4. Elections shall be held during the first business meeting in January. All officers are elected to a one-year term of service commencing the day after the April meeting.

Section 5. If the office of President should become vacant for any reason, the Vice-President shall fill that vacancy for the remainder of the term. If any office other than the President shall become vacant, that vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the President for the remainder of the term.

Section 6. No one shall hold more than one office at a time and no one shall be eligible to serve more than four consecutive terms in the same office.

Section 7. The officers shall perform the duties prescribed by these bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by the (club name).

### **Article V Meetings**

Section 1. The club shall hold at least one regular business meeting a quarter. The time, day and location of this meeting shall be set by vote of the membership and shall be published, or posted via two separate mediums not less than one week prior to the meeting.

Section 2. The regular meeting in January shall be for the purpose of electing officers.

Section 3. Special meetings may be called by the President or by the request of five members. At least two days notice via one medium shall be given prior to any special meeting.

Section 4. Business shall be transacted by a quorum of sixty percent (60%) of the membership.

Section 5. The highest club officer in attendance shall preside at the club meeting.

### **Article VI Parliamentary Authority**

Section 1. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, shall govern the club in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws and any special rules of order the club may adopt.

Section 2. Robert's Rules of Order shall be suspended for the remainder of any given meeting by a simple quorum vote of the Preferred Members in attendance of said meeting.

### **Article VII Amendment of the Bylaws**

Section 1. These bylaws can be amended at any meeting of the club by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the membership present, provided that the amendment(s) had been submitted in writing at a previous meeting, not less than two weeks prior to the vote.

## Club Officers

Club officers should be elected on the grounds of merit and the ability to accomplish goals. Many clubs go astray by choosing “friends” to accomplish the job when more qualified individuals are available within the club. Elect club officers with much caution and consideration. The following are examples of club officer duties:



Photo Courtesy of Texas State Rifle Association

### President

The president should be knowledgeable concerning safety and marksmanship and well respected by the community and club members. The president will conduct and preside over all club meetings. He or she is responsible for formulating, carrying out, and organizing support for club programs that offer the best potential for increasing the strength and longevity of the club. The president should be the hardest working member of the club, i.e., a true leader by example.

### Vice President

The vice president should be qualified to succeed the president and perform the duties of the president in case of his or her absence or upon request. The vice president should display a willingness to lead and a true desire for the success of the current club president’s agenda.

### Secretary

The secretary should have a “can do” attitude and have good record keeping skills. The secretary is the keeper of all club records. The secretary takes minutes of all meetings. In recording minutes, special attention should be given



to all formal motions made and disposition thereof. Concise and orderly files should be kept of all club records, bylaws, meeting minutes, etc.

## **Treasurer**

The treasurer is responsible for all club financial statements. The treasurer is to prepare or have prepared an income and expense report indicating the club's financial condition. Every club, regardless of size, should have a checking account to better track expenditures. It is a normal business practice to have the requirement of two officers signatures on each check as a means of dual control. The treasurer is responsible for maintaining records relating to the financial condition of the club, such as property records, club investments, and inventory of supplies.

## **Marksmanship Instructor**

The Marksmanship instructor is the club officer that is responsible for the overseeing of marksmanship instruction. The (MI) should have or be in the process of obtaining certification in marksmanship safety instruction from a credible source such as the CMP, USA Shooting, or the NRA. Once basic certification is obtained continuing education should be sought out for the continual learning process. The MI should have the desire to constantly learn and then to teach others in the safe and ethical use of firearms.

## **Range Master**

The range master is the club officer that is responsible for the running of the range and all range related activities. The (RM) should have, or be in the process of obtaining, certification as a Range Safety Officer. The NRA currently offers a course of instruction where the participant can obtain a Range Safety Officer credential. Once the RSO course is completed the RM needs to continue his or her education, i.e. seek out completion of the Chief Range Officer's course. The range master should be concerned with the safety of the club members on the range first and always.



## **Officer Reports**

The officers should give reports at each scheduled meeting concerning their appropriate area. Please refer to Robert's Rules of Order for the proper conduct of club meetings.

## **Planning Club Meetings**

The main purpose of a club meeting is to transact club business in an orderly fashion. A successful meeting depends on how well the meeting is planned in advance. Meetings should be held monthly or quarterly depending on the membership, work/personal constraints and club needs.

Members can become discontent with the club if each individual's needs are not at least considered. Successful clubs base decisions that concern the entire group by having a vote to determine the outcome.

The club membership should be notified well in advance (two weeks minimum) of the time, date, and location of the meeting. The meeting should begin and end on time. Club meetings should be run in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order. Below is a typical order sequence for a meeting:

1. Attendance taken.
2. Reading of minutes by the club secretary from the previous meeting.
3. Officer reports.
4. Old business.
5. New business.
6. Schedule of the next meeting.

## Club Finances

The budget is essential to the club's survival as an organization. A meeting should be held to decide upon a budget constraints and the optimal means of producing club income. During this meeting an operating budget should be prepared and established by member majority vote. After the "budget meeting" a structure for member dues collection can be established. Member dues are, for most clubs, the best source for revenue acquisition, i.e., more members, more revenue.

### Sources of Revenue:

1. Member Dues
2. Memorabilia Sales
3. Concessions
4. Fund Raising
5. Range Fees
6. Donations

## Incorporation

To incorporate, a club must file a certificate of incorporation with an officially designated state agency, usually the secretary of state in the state, in which they are organized. Club members may find it convenient to operate on an informal basis, but there are significant advantages to incorporating. One advantage is that members and officers acting in good faith may not be personally liable for the debts and obligations of an incorporated club. Clubs should consult with a knowledgeable attorney to determine specific procedures and laws applicable to their state.

## Taxes

All organizations are subject to federal income tax. An organization claiming exemption from federal income tax, unless already in receipt of a determination

of ruling letter from the IRS establishing such exemption, is required by the Treasury Department regulations (Revenue Ruling 54-164) to file an application for exemption with the key district in which the organization maintains its home office.

IRS regulations provide that, in general, a civic league or organization described in the Section 501(c)(4) of the IRS code may be exempt if: (1) it is not organized for profit; and (2) it is operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare. An attorney and/or tax accountant should be consulted for specifics.

### **State Income Taxes**

Regulations vary from state to state concerning income taxes. Information on state taxes may be obtained by writing to the income tax division of the department of revenue for your state.

### **Federal Income Taxes**

The U.S. Treasury Department publishes a booklet entitled "How to Apply for Recognition of Exemption for An Organization". The club can obtain this booklet by writing to the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

## **Shooting Programs**

After learning more about the opportunities and possibilities available to the members of your club, it is time to establish specific club shooting program goals. Since there are so many different possibilities in shooting, deciding on specific goals for your club will keep club officers focused on meeting the expectations and interests of group members. The following are some questions you must answer in setting program goals:

1. What type of shooting program? Many clubs start off as one of the groups listed below. Others decide to establish a Junior Division and affiliate with one or more national youth-serving agency programs after they organize.



- A. Junior Rifle Club
- B. High School Rifle Team
- C. JROTC Rifle Team
- D. 4-H Shooting Sports Club
- E. City/County Recreation Department Youth Program
- F. Boy Scout Venturing Crew
- G. Junior division to rifle/pistol/sportsmen's club
- H. Local marksmanship/shooting sports club



2. Who will you serve? Will the organization be an open club or will it restrict membership? Will the club have a Junior division? Where will the members come from?
  
3. What age groups can belong? Will your organization focus on any particular large group? The age groups served can impact range requirements due to the type of rifles used.

## Some Shooting Program Objectives:

1. **Firearm Safety Training.** Objective is to provide a course on firearm safety training primarily to assure that each club member learns how to handle firearms safely.
2. **Introduction to Target Shooting.** Objective is to provide firearms safety training plus instruction in basic marksmanship skills needed to be able to assume the rest and standing positions and fire accurately at training targets.

### 3. Basic Marksmanship

**Course.** Primary Objective is to provide a complete course of instruction in three-position target rifle shooting. Basic marksmanship courses often end with an introduction to competition shooting.

### 4. Three-Position

**Competition.** Objective is to teach all participants firearm safety plus a basic marksmanship course and then to facilitate the training and further preparation of all interested persons for ongoing competition shooting activities. Requires a club shooting season of four to eight months, with the opportunity for all interested participants to return for further advancement in ensuing years.

**5. Development for other Shooting Sports.** Objective is to teach a basic marksmanship course and then offer interested persons an opportunity to advance into other shooting sports competition training for highpower rifle, pistol, black powder or other forms of shooting. Requires a team or club shooting season of three to six months, with the opportunity for all interested participants to return for further advancement in ensuing year.



## Public Relations

A properly run public relations campaign can be the difference between your club advancing or declining. The benefits of a good public relations program are numerous. Public relations, when used properly, can help the public better understand the real benefits of the shooting sports. Shooting sports activities can be shown as healthy and constructive when managed through a properly operated club. Some decisions must be made before embarking on a public relations campaign.

- 1. Who will handle public relations for the club?** A club officer with experience and interest in the advertising field is preferred. The person should be able to communicate both verbal and in writing, when dealing with all forms of media.
- 2. What forms of media will be used?** The public relations officer should establish relationships with all forms of local media. By establishing these relationships, no one select form of media is locked in, i.e. options for change and growth are still available.
- 3. How will funding for public relations be raised?** The public relations officer is responsible for organizing fund raising efforts dedicated for club advertising. Funds are usually limited so an inexpensive way of getting the word out about your club is the placement of a story in your local newspaper. A lot of the time a local paper will print an announcement or short article about local events for free as a community service. Please look at the sample provided below of how to submit an announcement to the local newspaper.

### **Sample Announcement:**

Alex M. Grimes of the Moss Branch Shooting Club won the .22 caliber rifle championship today at the Highway 202 Range. Mr. Grimes scored 294 out of a possible 300, a Moss Branch record in rimfire sporter. Wind and inclement weather were more than likely to blame for the loss of six points over the course.

### **Helpful Hints:**

1. Observe at least one-inch margins.
2. Give the name of your club and all contact information for easy access.
3. Always give the dateline and headline that will attract the editor and will indicate the content.
4. Type the story.
5. Give room at the top and the bottom of the page for the editor's notes.
6. Be prepared to give additional information if requested.

## **Affiliation with CMP**

Chapter 407 – Corporation for The Promotion of Rifle Practice and Firearms Safety

Section 40732: Sale of firearms and supplies

(a) Affiliated organizations. – The corporation may sell, at fair market value, caliber .22 rimfire and caliber .30 surplus rifles, air rifles, caliber .22 and .30 ammunition, repair parts, and other supplies to organizations affiliated with the corporation that provide training in the use of firearms.

(b) Gun club members. – (1) The corporation may sell, at fair market value, caliber .22 rimfire and .30 surplus rifles, ammunition, repair parts and other supplies necessary for target practice to a citizen of the United States who is over 18 years of age and who is a member of a gun club affiliated with the corporation.

The CMP operates through a network of affiliated shooting clubs and associations that covers every state in the U.S. The clubs and associations offer firearms safety training and marksmanship courses as well as the opportunity for continued practice and competition.

Any shooting club or non-profit organization that meets the following criteria may apply for affiliation with the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP). Affiliation is open to a variety of organizations including high school and college teams, 4-H clubs, ROTC and JROTC Units, Boy Scouts troops and posts, American Legion Posts, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Police Athletic Leagues among others.

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

#### **HOW TO ENROLL**

If you're a club seeking to affiliate with CMP, we look forward to working with you to assist your club in reaching its goals and in reaching the mission and vision of the CMP – to promote marksmanship training and firearms safety for all qualified U.S. citizens with a special emphasis on youth. You'll find information below about clubs, affiliations and steps you'll need to take to become part of the CMP family.









**Civilian Marksmanship Program**

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