



IMRA Forum Netiquette Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines on what is best practice behaviour in formulating posts to insert on the Forum.

Summary

- Be respectful of all contributors.
- Delay your response if you feel very strongly about a matter.
- Substantiate your comments with objective information, wherever possible.
- Don't be self-righteous - have an open mind and try to understand others' points of view
- Don't keep repeating the same point.
- Be honest and truthful.
- Once a final decision has been made by the committee, accept it, and move on.

Forum Etiquette

- **Formulate your post in a manner respectful of others**

Comments should not be personal, and people should not be criticized explicitly or implicitly.

Try hard to understand the opinions of others before reacting to them. If you strongly disagree with something, it is good practice to delay your input for 24 hours, or at least overnight, before responding.

Consider the possible impact of your comments and remember that not everyone has a thick skin! Humour and wit are welcome provided they are not used in deliberately distasteful or inflammatory ways - use good judgement. And obviously, never post defamatory comments i.e. material that may damage a person's reputation. Such material can be very damaging and upsetting for the person involved and can form the basis for expensive legal actions against you personally. Always remember that the IMRA forum is a public forum.

Assume best intentions on the part of all contributors. We're all part of the same association; it is our leisure pursuit. It is reasonable to assume that people are genuine in their opinions. If their opinion is different to yours, it may be that they have some experience that gives them an insight you lack. Even more reason to be respectful, even if you don't understand their point of view. Don't give in to the temptation of 'scoring points' in a debate.

- **Base your comments on objective information and facts**

As far as possible support your opinion, suggestion or comment with objective information and facts; rather than expressing generalized and unsubstantiated opinions.

- **Avoid a self-righteous tone in your comments**

Bear in mind that most situations that give rise to a debate are not amenable to a black and white solution. This can be a significant issue in some threads where there have been some inputs that appear to believe there is only one possible, right solution.

Consider the possibility that your own opinion might be misplaced or not based on accurate or knowledgeable information or experience. Be open to feedback.

Remember that even if your opinion appears to be supported by others contributing to the Forum, this does not mean it is necessarily widely supported by IMRA members. Many members do not read the Forum regularly and even if they do, many choose not to get involved in discussions. The Forum is very democratic in concept but not necessarily in content.

In an association like IMRA, it is normal for there to be a huge range of opinions, nobody has a monopoly of wisdom. The Committee must interpret the feelings of the membership more generally; and use their extensive experience and collective judgement to take the best decisions possible.

- **Avoid undue repetition of the same argument**

There have been cases where an individual keeps repeating an argument made previously by them or others. This can give rise to the feeling that they expect the argument to prevail by sheer weight of number of repetitions (if you hammer at the door enough times, it will eventually open). While it's very probable that they are well intentioned in their actions, and simply passionate in their opinions; to express themselves in this way could be interpreted as political behaviour which has no place in the Forum.

So, make your point and leave the field free to others. Don't expect others necessarily to adopt your opinion. There is nothing wrong with diversity of opinion and it is up to the committee to take decisions, not the Forum. Endless repetition just makes it difficult to follow the debate.

- **Be honest and truthful!**

This obviously should go without saying, but all forum comments should be, at a minimum, posted on this basis.

- **Accept committee decisions with good grace**

We have elected the committee to run the association, and they expend very considerable time and energy doing so. They deserve our respect and support.

All IMRA members are free to disagree with decisions, or events, or plans, or policy, or strategy, but forum posts should not criticize the people who have formulated these or who have been involved in communicating or implementing them. And once final decisions have been taken there is no benefit in continuing the debate on the forum. If you have heartfelt opinions on some

matter and disagree with something that is going on in IMRA, the AGM is the place to get policy changed, put forward a motion or get yourself elected.

All comments on the forum should be respectful of the other parties involved, but this is particularly the case for committee members. Other people make a conscious choice to put their heads over the parapet of the forum, but committee members often have no choice but to get involved. Yes, they have allowed their names to go forward for election to the committee, but this often just means that they have had their arms twisted and have agreed to take their turn. There is never a queue of people to join the committee, let's not frighten potential members off.

The Role of Moderator

The IMRA Executive Committee have a legal Duty of Care to the members; obviously this applies mainly to the safe operation of races. However, it could also be considered to apply to the content on the website managed by IMRA. So, there is a need to provide for protection of members from obscene, abusive, threatening, bullying or otherwise inappropriate posts to the forum.

There are occasional cases (thankfully rare) where the good-natured, fun atmosphere of the forum is soured by an angry or unpleasant or generally nasty post. Sometimes the forum benefits from these being removed. In other cases, once the heat of the moment passes, the individual may realize that the post was inappropriate. They can address this by making a further post to acknowledge this and end the matter there.

Where the matter isn't resolved in this way, the Moderator is responsible for managing these situations. That can mean deleting individual posts, even, in exceptionally circumstances, whole threads. Or it may just mean putting up a post reminding people of their responsibilities as members of IMRA.

It is important to recognise that each person is individually responsible for what they post online. IMRA does not accept responsibility for the online activity of its members whether on the IMRA forum or on other social media platforms.

Appointment of a Moderator

The role of Moderator is not a Committee role, therefore unelected. A moderator will be appointed from year to year by the current committee.

What to expect from the role of the Moderator for the IMRA Forum

If an active and current IMRA member has a concern about the nature of a post on the forum they can contact the moderator and request them to review or consider the matter under the scope of this Netiquette policy.

Complaints about potential breaches of the Netiquette should be emailed to moderator@imra.ie. In general, the moderator will not act without being contacted, except in serious or urgent cases.

The moderator will consider the request and make a recommendation to the committee on the matter and will also reply to the member raising the concern. The decision of the moderator on all concerns raised will be final.

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