

(Updated: 10-31-13)

A metal detecting club's mission is to have elected officers and volunteer staff, grow its membership, hold a monthly meeting, establish an annual event, and create a fun and positive atmosphere for its members.

An additional important responsibility that is often overlooked is the training and education of its membership. This education and training should be directed toward how to practice the hobby legally, in a non-destructive manner and on proper use of metal detectors. This article will highlight a few of the training programs that a club should consider and offer to its membership.

A metal detecting training program that is offered by a club in the "Dos and Don'ts" of the hobby displays a strong commitment to the local community. A trained membership knowing the where, how and why attributes of the hobby will keep the hobby in the good graces of the local recreation department and private land owners.

Resources for membership training can usually come from the membership itself. Some club members have been practicing the hobby for sometime and have an extensive knowledge base of information. These members are a good source for the club's training program and leadership. Every effort should be made to document any training program for future use. One easy way to document any training program is to create a video of the training event and / or document the training event in a power point presentation.

A club that is involved in any structured training programs should keep an active record of who has completed the training and what type of training was completed. This could be done by simply creating an Excel spreadsheet with each member's name and a column for each type of training. A check in the column under a specific training program logged to the member's name would provide for a great tracking tool. This tool could be of great benefit if a club needed to address an issue with a local recreation department, city authorities or even a private land owner. The tool would provide evidence that the club is proactive in community stewardship by training its members in how the hobby should be practiced.

Training can be in many forms.

Self-Help Program. Clubs should offer a short class on self-help to all detectorists that join the club or any detectorist that purchases a new detector. There should be one or two club members assigned to this program who are well versed in detector operations and that can navigate the web for information. The self-help leaders can provide the necessary re-enforcement to all detectorists to complete the five steps below or some similar designed program.

Manual. Self-help training is becoming familiar with your detector's operation and adjustments. This can be accomplished by reading the manufacturer's user manual. While reading the manual have your detector in hand and operational so that you can actually perform the adjustments as you read about them in the manual. This will provide you with a sense as to where the adjustments are and how the adjustments are made and what they can actually do for you. Hint: Most detector control electronics work without a coil attached, so using a detector in this mode can be a very valuable educational tool. By disconnecting the coil there will be no coil performance noise that can cause a distraction.

Videos. The next self-help step is go to the manufacturer's website and view the manufacturer's video for the detector that you have purchased. Again, view this video with your detector in your hand so that you can actually perform the video narrator's actions as they go through the various detector adjustments.

YouTube. Once the detector's user manual has been read at least once and the manufacturer's videos have been reviewed the next step in self-help is to go to the YouTube website. Perform a YouTube search for videos that

other detectorist have posted about your specific detector. These videos can be very helpful especially if the narrator of the YouTube video provided adjustment information with his video.

How-To Websites. There are many metal detecting websites designed by individual detectorist that offer articles and helpful steps and hints on how-to start metal detecting. Metal detecting club websites may also offer useful information on how to approach certain situations and even training programs. Viewing these websites can be a very informative approach to your self-help training program.

Practice. The last self-help step is to practice, practice, practice what you have read, seen on videos and found on how-to websites. Take this learned information and your detector into the back yard and start your adventure by practicing how to setup and use your detector. To practice you may need to actually plant targets in the ground, find the targets and retrieve them. Continue to practice till you become very confidence in your detector's performance by setting up many different detector adjustment situations to see how different adjustments can impact your detector's performance.

Self Help Recap:

- *Read and study the manufacture's manual.*
- *Review the manufacture's detector videos.*
- *Search for videos on YouTube for your detector.*
- *Search the web for how-to websites offered by individual detectorist and clubs.*
- *Practice.*

Certification Program. There is a Power Point presentation on the MDHTALK website that clubs should consider. This program is divided into the three parts (MD 101, MD 102 and MD 103.) Each section builds upon the previous section. It takes about five to six hour with some field time to go though the three sections in a classroom environment.

- *Certification Program.*
- <http://www.mdhtalk.org/articles/certification-program/MD-101-color.pdf>
- <http://www.mdhtalk.org/articles/certification-program/MD-102-color.pdf>
- <http://www.mdhtalk.org/articles/certification-program/MD-103-color.pdf>

Classroom Instruction and Field Training. One extremely important type of training that must be part of any club's program is to provide detailed training and follow-up training on target pin-pointing and target recovery.

- *Target Pin-pointing and Recovery.* Clubs must offer a training class on how to recover target from the turf this needs be a very high priority for any club. This is very important since improper recovery of a target can be very destructive. This class should have some classroom time and then several session in the field by practicing on target recovery. This training program must be a requirement for all members and for it to be successful there needs to be a program leader.

Specific Detector Training. This type of training should have a detecting buddy assigned to the individual. This detecting buddy can be counted on to provide help as needed by the detectorist. There are many times that a new or old member would like some specific training on a recently purchased new detector model. First, the member should be required to complete the self-help program outlined at the beginning of this article. Once the individual has taken the responsibility to do the self-help program and completed it, the club member detecting buddy can now provide the final assistance. The final phase of training is to go into the field with the individual and provide the necessary assistance required.

Classroom Education. Metal detecting clubs need to step-up to the plate and start to take a much more active role in developing subject matter for classroom education. This type of training may have a direct impact on a metal detectorist ability to perform better in the field and this educational training can also aid in the community's perception of the hobby.

Law. All club members should be required to attend a class or classes on laws that impact metal detecting.

Local Law. The classes on local law must cover local municipal code, county regulation and school site rules that either directly prohibits metal detecting or may indirectly impact metal detecting by imposing rules that would effect target recovery on public grounds. There should also be a good amount of discussion concerning private lands and cemeteries.

State Laws. A class on state law must cover regulations dealing with state parks, state historical sties and places, archaeology sites, Indian burial grounds and Indian sites in general.

National Laws. The class on national law should cover the following acts with handout for each class participant. The class should also cover National Moments, Nation Parks and Recreational Areas, National Forest, Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Corp of Engineers regulations.

- 1906 [American Antiquities Act](#)
- 1966 [National Historic Preservation Act As amended through 2000](#)
- 1997 [Archaeological Resources Protection Act](#)
- 1990 [Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act](#)

Ethics and Permissions. With any class there should be time spent on metal detecting ethics and how to gain permission to metal detect private lands and in a few cases permission for public lands.

Law Recap: See This MDHTALK Article <http://www.mdhtalk.org/articles/legal-to-detect/legal-to-detect.htm>

- *Local Laws.*
- *State Laws.*
- *National Laws.*
- *Ethics and Permission.*

Other Important Educational Club Training Programs. There are other training programs that can be offered by any club. Below you will find a short list of topics. The training programs in this list have support material on the MDHTALK website. Each of these programs will build the creditability, expertise and strengthen its club members.

- *Archaeology Methods & Recovery.* <http://www.mdhtalk.org/tutorials/archaeology-bc/amdc-ss-color.pdf>
- *Beach Detecting.* <http://www.mdhtalk.org/tutorials/beaches/metal-detecting-beaches-color.pdf>
- *Competition Detecting.* <http://www.mdhtalk.org/ethics/competition-hunt-etiquette.htm>
- *Coil Selection.* <http://www.mdhtalk.org/tutorials/coils/md-searchcoils-color.pdf>
- *Detector Discrimination.* <http://www.mdhtalk.org/tutorials/discrimination/md-discrimination-101-color.pdf>
- *Evidence Recovery.* <http://www.mdhtalk.org/articles/evidence-search/evidence-search-training-course-web-color.pdf>

Summary. In this day and age clubs need to take responsibility for a trained membership. Training requires a commitment of the club officers and members must volunteer to help and develop the various training programs. How the training is done is not as important as getting it done and documenting who has completed the training. Training on how to practice metal detecting can directly effect the competence of the detectorist and in the long term will strengthen the club in the eyes of the community.