

## Mid-Columbia Bluegrass Association Jam Guidelines

Following these simple concepts makes the jam fun for those of all abilities.

1. **Everyone can play here.** Every musical ability is encouraged to participate, but please come practiced, prepared, and tuned.
2. **When you lead a song, lead it.** When it is your turn to lead a song, make sure everyone knows what song it is, what key, what time signature, and go over the chords of the song if it is not a common Bluegrass tune. Clearly look at a musician and get eye contact so that person knows they will take the next break.
3. **Keep aware of others.** Make room for new people arriving. Wait in between songs before you enter a jam so as to not to disrupt the song.
4. **Keep the Jam Small.** Too many in the jam, or too many of the same type of instruments? You can take turns playing, or you can form another jam in another room. Experience tells us that very large jams are sometimes harder to hear and still be “on the same page”.
5. **Learn the tune before you play.** If you don't know the tune, listen to it a few times around before you try and do a “break” (solo).
6. **Do not play too loud.** You should always be able to easily hear the singers voice or any instrument doing a break at that time. Sing or play LOUD only when it is your turn.
7. **Please be in tune.** Need we say more?
8. **Jams are not free music lessons.** If you want a free music lesson from another jam mate, go into a different room to do it, or do it at another time.
9. **Jams are not the same as an open mike.** If you want to showcase songs with; complicated rhythms; numerous chord changes; non-ordinary arrangements; want to sing the song as a singer-songwriter without giving others solos, it's best to save the song for the open mike.
10. **We are here to play in the Bluegrass style.** In Bluegrass, each instrument has it's own specific sound and role, and maintaining that traditional role makes the jam more enjoyable for all. If you are unsure about what this sound should be for your instrument, just play quietly, and go home and listen to old Flatt & Scruggs, Bill Monroe, Stanley Brothers etc. Knowing the sound of the genre really makes you have more fun in this jam.