



← ORDER OF THE ARROW →

Has your unit scheduled an Order of the Arrow election?

A successful unit election is the first step to attaining membership in the Order of the Arrow. If your unit has had an election every year or if this is your first exposure to the "OA", this page will help you understand what will happen, when it will happen and what you need to do to best have your unit prepared. If at any time you have a question contact the lodge for clarification and we will respond as quickly as possible.

Many "tall tales" are shared between "old timers" and even some more recently inducted members to our Order. Foremost, is the rumor that the Order of the Arrow does a lot in secret and is some sort of "secret society". Nothing could be further from the truth. The OA is a program within the Scouting program. ALL the rules that apply to your unit apply to the OA. Hazing in any form is not allowed. We encourage an air of mystery to the youth because it builds anticipation. But the content of our ceremonies and the details of our induction sequence may be discussed with any truly interested adult leader or parent. If this is an area of concern, please contact the Lodge Advisor, and he will arrange a time to discuss and answer your questions. There are NO religious implications.

Question: Why should my unit have a unit election?

There are several reasons each troop in the Sioux Council should plan for and hold an annual OA election. It is an excellent opportunity for the youth of your troop to recognize those they view as leaders and outstanding Scouts. This recognition can encourage your members as they progress in Scouting. When an older Scout becomes more involved in Scouting, his bonds will grow. Because all OA members must be an active member of their unit, your unit can benefit by retaining older members as leaders and examples to younger Scouts. Finally, the OA has many opportunities beyond what most units can offer to gain leadership skills that benefit them personally and ultimately, your troop.

Question: When can we have an election?

Anytime from January to March 31st. The date can be a regular troop meeting or a special meeting.

Contact the Tetonwana Lodge if you have any other questions concerning O.A. membership or O.A unit elections

Membership Requirements

Unit leader approval. To become eligible for election, a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout must be registered with the Boy Scouts of America and have the approval of his unit leader **prior** to the election. The unit leader must certify his Scout spirit (i.e., his adherence to the Scout Oath and Law and active

participation in unit activities). The unit leader must also certify that the nominee meets all specified requirements at the time of this annual election.

Youth membership qualifications. All members of, or candidates for membership in, the Order of the Arrow who are under 21 years of age shall be considered youth members or candidates for youth membership, subject to meeting the following requirements:

- Be a registered member of the Boy Scouts of America.
- Hold the First Class rank of the Boy Scouts of America, as a minimum.
- After registration with a troop or team, have experienced 15 days and nights of Boy Scout camping during the two-year period prior to the election. The 15 days and nights must include one, but no more than one, long term camp consisting of six consecutive days and five nights of resident camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America.

The balance of the camping must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps.

Candidates for youth membership shall be elected by other youth members in accordance with policies set forth by the national Order of the Arrow committee.

Scouts with special needs. The Order of the Arrow is committed to including Scouts and Scouters who have special needs because of a disability. In the case of special-needs troops, election teams should follow the same procedures, keeping in mind that any Scout who is classified as a youth member of a troop, regardless of age, will be considered a youth (voting) member. All other membership requirements remain the same. When inducting a Scout or Scouter with a special need, as with any candidate, lodges should make the activities challenging within the individual's limitations, and plan accordingly. Accessibility to ceremonial circles, sleeping sites, and appropriate work projects should be taken into consideration to ensure a meaningful induction.

(See the appendix for Guidelines for Assisting Scouts and Scouters With Special Needs.)

Adult membership qualifications. All members of, or candidates for membership in, the Order of the Arrow who are 21 years of age or older and who are registered members of the Boy Scouts of America shall be considered adult members or candidates for adult membership. Individuals shall be selected as candidates based on the following:

1. Adult leaders in units: Each year, upon holding a troop or team election for youth candidates that results in at least one youth candidate being elected, the unit committee may nominate adults to the lodge adult selection committee. The number of adults nominated can be no more than one-third of the number of youth candidates elected, rounded up where the number of youth candidates is not a multiple of three. In addition to the one-third limit, the unit committee may nominate the currently-serving unit leader (but not assistant leaders), as long as he or she has served as unit leader for at least the previous twelve months. Recommendations of the adult selection committee, which consists of the lodge adviser, the chairman of the council committee on which the lodge adviser serves, and the lodge staff adviser, with the approval of the Scout executive, serving as Supreme Chief of the Fire, will be candidates for induction, provided the following conditions are fulfilled:

- Selection of the adult is based on the ability to perform the necessary functions to help the Order fulfill its purpose, and not for recognition of service, including current or prior achievement and positions.
- The individual will be an asset to the Order because of demonstrated abilities that fulfill the purpose of the Order.
- The camping requirements set forth for youth members are fulfilled.
- The adult leader's membership will provide a positive example for the growth and development of the youth members of the lodge.

2. Adult leaders in council and district positions: The lodge adviser, district chairmen, council president, or members of the professional staff may nominate adults to the lodge adult selection committee. All requirements set forth for adult leaders in units must be fulfilled, with the exception of the camping requirements, which may be waived at the discretion of the lodge adviser and Scout executive. Recommendations of the adult selection committee, with the approval of the Scout executive, serving as Supreme Chief of the Fire, will become candidates for induction. Adults may be nominated for membership only one time per year as either unit Scouters or district/council Scouters, but not both. How they are nominated depends on where they maintain their primary registration. Because the Order of the Arrow is principally a youth organization, unit, district, and council Scouters are not selected for membership as a recognition. Selection should take place only when the adult's position in Boy Scouting or Varsity Scouting will make Order of the Arrow membership more meaningful in the lives of the youth membership.

Professional membership. Members of the professional service of the Boy Scouts of America shall be considered ex officio members of the lodge of the council in which they are employed. Members of the professional service designated by the Scout executive to serve in camp positions should be given an opportunity to complete the Ordeal and the Ordeal ceremony if they have not previously been inducted into a lodge of the Order. Members of the professional service whose responsibility in the council would be enhanced may be inducted into the lodge based on the recommendation of the Scout executive and upon completion of the Ordeal experience and ceremony. Camp staff members (paid but not considered members of the professional service) shall be elected only by members of their own unit if they are under age 21 and meet the youth membership requirements. Staff members over age 21 must meet the adult membership requirements and be selected as either unit Scouters or district/council Scouters.

Honorary membership. Honorary membership in the Order of the Arrow is not authorized and shall not be given. Membership in the Order shall be gained only through fulfillment of membership requirements as stated in the official literature of the Order of the Arrow, Boy Scouts of America. Visiting Scouts or leaders cannot be given honorary memberships in the Order.

Life membership. A life membership in the Order of the Arrow is not authorized and shall not be recognized. Membership in the Order of the Arrow requires current registration with the Boy Scouts of America. There is no official or authorized life membership registration status for the Order of the Arrow in the Boy Scouts of America.

Unit Elections

To become a member of the Order of the Arrow, a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout is chosen by vote of the youths in his unit. This is a unique feature of the Order since the majority of those who select their candidates for this honor are not members of the lodge. However, lodge members in the unit have a vote as well as nonmembers. In this way membership is controlled by the youths in their own units and not by those who are already Arrowmen. It is important that the members of the unit have the membership requirements properly explained to them.

Registered active member. In Boy Scout troops and Varsity Scout teams, every registered active member of the unit under age 21 at the time of election is eligible to vote. A Boy Scout or Varsity Scout who carries a current national membership card and participates in at least some unit activities during the year is considered to be a registered active member of the unit. For example, a youth away at college who participates in some unit activities when home, such as a campout, camporee, or occasional unit meeting, should be considered a registered active member.

A youth who moves away or drops out of the unit because of other interests would not be counted in the registered active membership figure.

Elections outside the registered council. All elections must be conducted by the Order of the Arrow lodge of the council in which the unit is chartered. *No unit may visit outside its own council and hold an OA election under the auspices of an OA lodge of another council. Elections are held only in troops or teams.*

Induction: Election to Ordeal

1. The lodge will determine the time of the year unit elections will be held and should inform troop and team leaders of this by mail well in advance. Lodges are encouraged to complete all unit elections prior to their troops/teams going to summer camp. This ensures that the maximum number of troop/team members can be present to vote in the election. Elections are not to be held in Venturing crews or Cub Scout packs.
2. The lodge, through the unit elections committee, should work with the troop/team leader in establishing the actual time and place to conduct the election. The Order should be represented by a two- or three-member team from the lodge or chapter unit elections committee. All election team members must be trained and in proper uniform during the election.
3. Before the election, the OA team must secure from the unit leader verification that at least 50 percent of the registered active unit membership is present. If at least 50 percent is not present, an election cannot be held. The number of registered active members and the number present are entered in the spaces provided on the unit election report form illustrated on page 24 of the Guide for Officers and Advisers. If the unit leader is an Arrowman, he may explain to the group the purpose of the Order of the Arrow and the basis upon which candidates should be selected, and describe the method of election. If the unit leader is not a member of the Order, a member of the OA team should make this presentation with the unit leader's consent, demonstrating that election leadership is a cooperative effort of the unit leader and the OA team.

4. The unit leader provides a list of all registered active members of the unit who meet all eligibility requirements, including attitude and participation. The names of these members are entered on the report form and the unit leader signs the certification.

5. The election team leader explains the following to the unit leader:

- This is the current method of election approved by the national OA committee in use by the lodge.
- All eligible youths who receive votes from at least 50 percent of those who turn in ballots are elected. If no one is elected a second vote may be held immediately, and the result of this vote will be final.

6. A voter may list on his ballot any combination of names, including all eligible candidates who he believes are worthy to become members of the Order of the Arrow.

7. The OA team conducts the election following the instructions on pages 26–27 of the Guide for Officers and Advisers. Stress the following points:

- Select the candidates who, in your opinion, have set the best examples of brotherhood, cheerfulness, and service.
- Vote only for those you believe will continue in unselfish service to your troop/team.
- If you feel that no one is worthy, turn in a blank ballot.
- If you are new in the unit and do not know the candidates well enough to vote wisely, you may abstain by not turning in a ballot at all; this will not affect the final result.
- Youths eligible for election also vote, and they may vote for themselves if they feel they are worthy.

8. When the voting is finished, the OA election team counts the number of ballots turned in, and enters the numbers on the unit election report.

9. The OA team determines the minimum number of votes one must receive to be elected, as follows: If the number of ballots turned in was even (2, 4, 6, 8, etc.), divide this number by two. If the number was odd (1, 3, 5, 7, etc.), add one and then divide by two. The number of votes a youth must receive to be elected is entered on the report form.

10. The votes are counted in private by the election team and the unit leader to determine who has been elected. All votes count equally. If at least one has been elected, the election result is final. If no one is elected, the OA team announces this fact and states that the unit will now be given the opportunity to vote again. Time is allowed for further explanation of the purpose of the Order and the election procedures, and for any questions. (No information about the votes received by candidates is to be revealed at any time.) The second ballot is then held immediately, and if the unit still elects no one, this is the final result for the year's election. The OA team places a check mark next to the names of those who have been elected.

Note: A unit elections video is available from the national office.

Announcement of results. As soon as the election is completed, the unit leader may or may not choose to announce to the entire unit the names of members who have been elected. The names and addresses (plus additional information the lodge feels is necessary) are listed on the election report

form. OA team members sign the form and mail it to the specified address immediately following the election.

Call-outs. Newly elected candidates will be called out at the earliest possible time, either at a resident camp, a camporee, or a special ceremony. The *Guide to Inductions*, which is available for download and printing at <http://www.oa-bsa.org>, contains information on how to conduct a call-out ceremony. Call-outs should be conducted by the OA lodge of the council in which the troop or team is chartered. This is the preferred method of call-out. It is recognized that there is some value in holding a call-out at a summer camp. A lodge may not call out candidates from a visiting out-of-council troop or team unless the unit leader presents a letter from the home lodge chief and lodge adviser, requesting the call-out and identifying the members to be called out. A signed copy of the home lodge's unit election report must accompany this letter. The home lodge chief and lodge adviser must receive confirmation of the call-out following the event.

Candidate status. Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, or adults remain candidates until completion of the Ordeal and Ordeal ceremony. If this period of candidacy exceeds one year, the candidate's name will be dropped. To become candidates again, they must be elected/selected again. The executive committee of the lodge may extend the one-year limit if a candidate is ill or there are other unusual circumstances. If a candidate permanently relocates to a new Boy Scout council prior to completing the Ordeal, the candidate should immediately join a troop or team in the new council. A copy of the election report must be presented to the new unit leader to arrange induction in the new lodge. The candidacy period is not restarted or extended. **Ordeals.** Candidates for membership in the Order must complete the Ordeal and must be inducted into the Order by the lodge that serves the council in which the unit is chartered. Out-of-council Ordeals are not permitted except when religious custom and observance precludes attendance at the Ordeals of a Scout's home lodge (e.g., Sabbath-observant Jewish Scouts). In this special case, the region Order of the Arrow chairman may be petitioned for an exception to permit the Scout to be inducted by another lodge.