



Order of the Arrow Unit Elections Guide

Tarhe Lodge #292

Adapted From

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Achpateuny Lodge #803
Taleka Chapter

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About this Guide

This guide has been developed to provide all Unit Leaders and Order of the Arrow (OA) members in the Tarhe Lodge a standardized set of Unit Election materials for use when planning and conducting Order of the Arrow elections. While this guide is not all-inclusive, it covers most of the common elections questions. Additional questions about the Unit Elections process should be directed to the Elections Advisor, Lodge Adviser, or the District Executive.

Please review the information contained in this Guide prior to conducting Unit Elections in your area to ensure that the Unit Elections performed are in compliance with current OA policy.

Election results that do not follow these policies may be invalidated at the discretion of the Chapter adviser in coordination with the council professional staff .

The information contained in this guide provides the current national OA policy for youth and adult membership requirements and unit election procedures. These sections are taken directly from the current Guide to Officers and Advisers (2004 Edition) as revised by Operations Updates available via the National Order of the Arrow website (<http://www.oa-bsa.org>) .

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the camping requirement for membership?

A: As Scouting's national honor society of campers, the Order of the Arrow requires that each youth and adult candidate have fulfilled the following in order to be eligible for election: After registration with a troop or team, have experienced fifteen days and nights of Boy Scout camping during the two-year period prior to the election. The fifteen 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.

Q: How many youth must be present to hold an election?

A: At least half of the registered active youth in a unit must be present before a unit election can be held.

Q: Can the unit leader prevent a youth candidates name from being placed on the ballot?

A: Yes. To become eligible for election and have their name placed on the ballot, each youth member must have the approval of the unit leader. The unit leader must certify prior to the election a candidate's 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 the annual election.

Q: Can a unit leader remove a candidates name after the election?

A: No. The unit leader should remove a candidate from consideration for election to the Order of the Arrow prior to the election being held. This is why the unit leader certifies, prior to the election, that the candidates have Scout spirit and that the nominee meets all specified requirements at the time of the annual election. Unit leaders should not take a "wait and see" approach where candidates that do not have their approval (or may be questionable) are placed on the ballot to wait and see whether their peers elect them.

Q: Can OA members from the unit where the election is being held conduct the election?

A: The Tarhe Lodge encourages the use of election team members from other units. This can prevent possible conflicts of interest during the vote count as well as demonstrate that the OA extends beyond the Troop or Team. OA members from the unit the election is being held in may conduct the election if no other arrangements can be made.

Q: Can a unit use pre-printed ballots?

A: Yes. However, care must be taken to ensure that all candidates' names appear on the ballot. Excluding a candidate's name and having it "written in" during the election should be discouraged since this may prevent a fair opportunity for this candidate to be elected. If it is discovered that an eligible candidate's name is missing from a pre-printed ballot, blank ballots should be used instead.

Q: Can “All of the above” or “None of the above” be included as choices on a ballot?

A: Yes. The only requirement that is in national OA policy along these lines is that “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”. “None of the above” votes should be treated as blank ballots for the purposes of counting. Ballots should not be presented that ask the voters to select candidates which they do not want to elect.

Q: Can Unit Elections be held in Venture Crews?

A: No. Unit Elections can be held only in Boy Scout Troops and Varsity Teams under current national OA policy. However, members of Venture Crews can be elected to the Order of the Arrow through a Troop or Team in which they are registered. The same youth and adult membership requirements apply.

Q: Are the young ladies in the Venture Crew eligible for election into the OA?

A: Current OA National Policy is that to be eligible as a youth (all members under age 21), a candidate must be registered in the Boy Scouts, hold at least the rank of first class, and fulfill the camping requirements. This means that female youth Crew members (under age 21) are ineligible. They may be elected once they are an adult (21 or older) through the adult nomination process.

Q: How many adults can a Unit recommend to the lodge adult selection committee?

A: The unit committee may recommend one adult to the lodge adult selection committee each year upon holding an election that results in at least one youth candidate being elected. Adult leaders are defined as registered members of the Boy Scouts of America who are 21 years of age or older. Troops or teams having more than 50 registered, active youth members may nominate an additional adult for every 50 registered, active youth, or fraction thereof. For example, a troop having 51 to 100 registered, active youth may nominate two adults each year if at least one youth has been elected.

Q: Can adult leaders be recommended at the district or council level?

A: Yes. The lodge adviser, district chairman, council president, or members of the professional staff may recommend adults to the lodge adult selection committee. All requirements 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.

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. Election of any person under 21 years of age as a candidate for membership shall be based on fulfillment of the youth membership requirements.

Scouts with special needs. The Order of the Arrow is committed to including Scouts and Scouters who have special needs because of 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.

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 recommend one adult to the lodge adult selection committee, composed of the lodge adviser, the chairman of the council committee on which the lodge adviser

serves, and the lodge staff adviser. Troops or teams having more than 50 registered active youth members may nominate an additional adult for every 50 registered, active youth, or fraction thereof. For example, a troop having 51 to 100 registered, active youth may nominate two adults each year if at least one youth has been elected. Recommendations of the adult selection committee, 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:

2.

- Selection of the adult is based on the ability to perform the necessary function 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 role model for the growth and development of the youth members of the lodge.

2. Adult leaders in council and district positions:

The lodge adviser, district chairman, council president, or members of the professional staff may recommend adults to the lodge adult selection committee.

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. 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.

Adults may be recommended for membership only one time per year as either unit Scouters or district/council Scouters, but not both. How they are recommended depends on where they maintain their primary registration.

Adult members shall be elected to membership at the discretion of the lodge adult selection committee. All members of the Order of the Arrow, both youth and adult, must successfully complete the Ordeal experience and participate in the induction ceremony.

Because the Order of the Arrow is principally a youth organization, unit, district, and council Scouters are not elected to membership as a recognition. Election into the Order should take place only when the adult's job in Boy Scouting or Varsity Scouting will make Order of the Arrow membership more meaningful in the lives of the youth membership.

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.

Election Procedures

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.

Unit Election Procedures

1. The lodge will determine the time of year unit elections will be held and should inform unit 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 unit 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. 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 can conduct the election following the unit elections ceremony found later in this guide. If the election team uses an alternate ceremony, it should be sure to 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 of 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, this 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.

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. Names and addresses of the newly elected candidates must be forwarded to the lodge membership committee immediately. Candidates will be called out at the earliest possible time, either at a resident camp, a camporee, or a special ceremony.

The names and addresses (plus additional information that 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.

Candidate status. After election, a Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, or adult remains a candidate 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 a candidate again, they must be reelected. The executive committee of the lodge may extend the one-year limit between election and induction if a candidate is ill or there are other unusual circumstances.

Unit Election Ceremony

OA Member A:

Fellow Boy Scouts, the Order of the Arrow is Scouting's national honor society. Its purpose is to recognize and honor those campers who best live up to the Scout Oath or Promise and Scout Law in their daily lives and to guide them in expanding the service that has made them outstanding. The Order promotes Scout camping and maintains camping traditions and spirit. It emphasizes that the good Scout camper is not only skilled in Scoutcraft, but also true to the ideals of Scouting and its tradition of the daily Good Turn.

The only way a Scout can become a member of the Order of the Arrow is to be elected for this honor by the members of his unit. To be eligible for election, a youth must fulfill the camping requirement and hold the First Class rank.

After being elected, the Scout must complete the Ordeal, which is a series of tests of his sincere dedication of the high ideals of Scouting and the Order. IF he is faithful in performing the tests, he takes a solemn pledge of service and is admitted into the Order. A long period of self-improvement and service then follows.

The lodge flap, Universal Arrow ribbon, and the distinctive sash identify the Order of the Arrow member. They are symbols of service. Our lodge has its own activities and projects, but our program does not replace the member's responsibility to his unit. Indeed, each Arrowman is expected to give richer service to his own troop or team in return for the honor his unit extended to him.

American Indian lore is an attractive sideline in our Order. Indian dances and ceremonies add color to our program of service, and members often make Indian lore their hobby. However, one does not need Indian attire or skill in Indian lore to become a valuable member of the Order of the Arrow.

Scouts, you will elect representatives to our brotherhood of cheerful service, and we are here to assist you in the election. All registered active members of this troop or team, except those 21 or older, are entitled to vote.

All those who receive votes from at least half of those who turn in ballots are elected. The number of candidates you elect will depend on how your votes agree with votes of other members of your unit.

Remember that an Order of the Arrow election is not a popularity contest! Don't vote for a Scout just because he is your friend or just because he is a good athlete or because he is older than the rest. What really counts is his loyalty to the Scout Oath or Promise.

Campaigning in an Order of the Arrow election is not permitted. You are expected to think for yourself; do not let others influence your decision. The election is by secret ballot and no

discussion will be permitted, so no one will know for whom you are voting. This important decision about your fellow Scouts is entirely up to you.

Before we announce the names of those eligible and begin the election, are there any questions?

(Answer any questions about the nature and purpose of the Order of the Arrow and the election procedure.)

OA Member B:

The following members of this unit have met the camping and advancement requirements and are eligible for election, as certified by your unit leader. Will you stand and form a line over here as your names are called?

(Point out a place to line up and read the list slowly. Arrange the candidates in a line facing the voters at the place indicated; the line can be semicircular if the eligible group is large. Write each name on the chalkboard or flip chart as called).

Scouts, you should now answer each of the following questions to yourself; your answers will help you to make the right selections.

OA Member A:

Who in this group is a friend to all and a brother to every other Scout? Who is pleasant and easy to get along with? Is he kind and helpful? In all, if you were a Tenderfoot Scout, would you like to hike and camp with him?

Who is cheerful, even when he has many tiresome jobs to do? Who smiles whenever he can? Who obeys promptly and cheerfully? Does he control his temper? If you were at camp with him for several weeks, do you think you would enjoy it?

Who is always ready to give unselfish and wholehearted service to others?

Who, in serving others, can forget his own desires and interests? Who has served your unit all year round, faithfully attending your meetings and helping with your service projects? Do you think he will continue to his service in the future? If you were his patrol leader, could you depend on him?

In all, ask yourselves: Who in this group, by living up to the Scout Oath, serves your fellow Scouts with such an example of brotherhood and cheerfulness that you look up to him with deep respect and admiration?

OA Member B:

Scouts, on the ballot you will be given, print the first and last names of 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. If you feel that no one is worthy, turn in an unmarked ballot. If you are new in the troop or team and do not know the candidates well enough to vote wisely, you may abstain by not turning in a ballot at all, and this will not affect the final result. Those eligible for election also vote, and they may vote for themselves if they feel they are worthy.

The names of the eligible candidates are listed on this chalkboard (flip chart, poster, etc.) When you are finished, fold the ballot only once and give the pencil and ballot to any member of the election team.

(Distribute election ballots and pencils.)

(Collect ballots and pencils. Count the votes in private with the unit leader.)

To be completed before the election

- A. Number of registered active youth in unit _____
- B. Divide line A by 2 and enter on line C _____
- C. Number of youth required to hold election _____
- D. Number of youth present _____

Is line D greater than line C? If so, proceed with the election. If not, an election cannot be held at this time. More registered active youth are required to be present before an election can be held.

To be completed after the election

- E. Number of ballots turned in _____
- F Divide line E by 2, round up, and enter on line G _____
- G. Number of votes required to be elected _____
- H. Number of candidates eligible _____
- I. Number of members elected _____

Election certified by: _____

Unit Leader: _____

Election Team members' signatures

Unit leader's signature

Return Unit Elections Report to Chapter Elections Adviser upon completion

Adult Nomination Form

Tarhe Lodge #292

This form may only be submitted if an election has been held in this unit and at least one youth was elected.

Any adult who is currently active and registered as a unit, district, or council Scouter is eligible for nomination for membership in the Order of the Arrow. This form is only for the nomination of a Scouter 21 years of age and older. Those Scouts under age 21 must meet the youth eligibility requirements and be elected as a youth. **Please note: this is only a nomination for candidacy. In accordance with national policy, this nomination must be reviewed and approved by an Adult Selection Committee before the nominee becomes a candidate for membership in the Order of the Arrow.**

Troops or teams having less than or equal to 50 registered, active youth members may nominate one adult. Troops or Teams having more than 50 registered, active youth members may nominate an additional adult for every 50 registered, active youth or fraction thereof. (As an example, a troop having 51 to 100 registered, active youth may nominate two adults.)

Please use a separate nomination form for each adult nominee.

A. Number of registered active youth _____

B. Divide line a by 50, round up, and enter on line c _____

C. Number of adults that may be nominated _____

D. Number of adults nominated by this unit _____

Troop or Team: _____ Date of Nomination: _____

Name: _____ Position: _____

Birth date: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____

Address: _____

E-mail address: _____

Phone Number: _____

(A) The same camping requirement set forth for youth candidates must be fulfilled by each adult nominee. Each nominee, after registration with a troop or team, must have experienced fifteen days and nights of Boy Scout camping during the two-year period prior to the election. The fifteen 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. This requirement may not be waived for adults nominated from a unit.

Does the nominee meet the camping requirement? Yes: ___ No: ___

Comments:

(B) Selection of an adult is based upon his or her ability to perform the necessary functions to help the Order fulfill its purposes, not for recognition of service, including current or prior achievement and position.

Do you believe the nominee will provide this assistance? Yes: ___ No: ___

Comments:

(C) The adult should be an asset to the Order due to demonstrated abilities that fulfill the purpose of the Order.

Do you believe the nominee meets this requirement? Yes: ___ No: ___

Comments:

(D) The adult leader's membership should provide a positive role model for the growth and development of the youth members of the lodge.

Do you believe the nominee will provide this role model? Yes: ___ No: ___

Comments:

This form must be signed by the unit committee chairman and the unit leader (unless he or she is being nominated).

I certify that the above adult member is eligible and approve them as a nominee for selection.

Committee Chairman's Signature: _____

Unit Leader's Signature: _____

For Chapter and Lodge use only

Unit _____

Youth election results received? Yes: ___ No: ___

At least one youth elected? Yes: ___ No: ___

Approvals:

Chapter Adviser's signature: _____

District Executive's signature: _____

Scout Executive's signature: _____

Final Status: Approved as a candidate: ___ Rejected: ___

More information requested: ___

Notification Date: _____ Candidate or Unit notified