



TARHE LODGE

# ORDER OF THE ARROW

## **Unit Elections 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 Lodge Chief or Lodge Adviser.

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 Lodge Chief or Lodge Adviser.

The information contained in this guide provides the current national OA policy for youth and adult membership requirements and unit election procedures. This information is taken from the current Guide for Officers and Advisers (2012 edition) and other information available through [www.oa-bsa.org](http://www.oa-bsa.org).

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# Membership Requirements

## 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 or higher; and
- After registration with a troop or team, have experienced 15 days and nights of Boy Scout camping during the two-year period prior to election. The 15 days and nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of at least 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.

Any concerns about the ability of the candidate to complete the induction process should be directed toward the Lodge Chief or Lodge Adviser.

## 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:

### 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 adults 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.

Unit committees may recommend one adult for every three youth members elected each year, rounded up. For example, if a unit elects four youth candidates, the unit committee may nominate up to two adults to the adult selection committee. If

the Scoutmaster or Team Coach is not a member of the Order of the Arrow, he or she may also be nominated without counting against the total number of available adult nominations. For example, in a unit in which the Scoutmaster is not a member of the Order of the Arrow, if four youth are elected, the unit committee may nominate the Scoutmaster and up to two other adults to the adult selection committee.

Adult nominations must be submitted to the adult selection committee via the attached Adult Nomination Form. Nominations submitted via other means will not be accepted.

### **Adult Leaders in Council or District Positions**

The Lodge Adviser, District Chairman, Council President, or members of the Council 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 should depend 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 and Life 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.

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 Members

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. **This includes members of the unit which have "aged out" of Boy Scouting (that is, have turned 18) but have not yet turned 21.**

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 the year unit elections will be held and should inform troop and team leaders of this by mail well in advance. As stated above, lodges are encouraged to complete all unit elections prior to their troops/teams going to summer camp. This insures that the maximum number of troop/team members can be present to vote in the election. For this reason and to avoid improper out-of-council unit requests, elections should not be conducted at summer camp.
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. **Units are not permitted to hold their own elections. Candidate reports submitted to the lodge without proper documentation of a valid election team will NOT be accepted and the unit will have to hold another 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 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 youth 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. The result of this second 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 unit elections team conducts the election. A unit election ceremony is attached to this document, and a unit elections video is available from the OA national office. 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 unit elections team counts the number of ballots turned in and enters the numbers on the Unit Elections Report.
9. The OA unit elections 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 Unit Elections Report.
10. The election team and the unit leader count the votes in private. All votes count equally. If at least one has been elected, the election result is final. The OA team places a check mark next to the names of those who have been elected.

11. 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 this year's election.

## **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 of have been elected.

Names, mail and email addresses, and phone numbers of the newly elected candidates must be forwarded to the lodge membership committee **immediately**. Candidates will be called out at Summer Camp that summer, which is when their candidacy period shall be considered effective.

## **Candidate Status**

After election, Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, and 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 re-elected.

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.

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.

## 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 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, develops leaders, 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 that 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 to 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. American Indian dances and ceremonies add color to our program of service, and members often make American Indian lore their hobby. However, one does not need American Indian attire or skill in American Indian lore to become a valuable member of the Order of the Arrow. In fact, most do not.

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 and Law.

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 (point) 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 C:** 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 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.)*







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ORDER OF THE ARROW

## Adult Nomination Form

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 or older. Those Scouts under age 21 must meet the youth eligibility requirements and be elected as a youth.

Unit committees may recommend one adult for every three youth members elected each year, rounded up. For example, if a unit elects four youth candidates, the unit committee may nominate up to two adults to the adult selection committee.

If the Scoutmaster or Team Coach is not a member of the Order of the Arrow, he or she may also be nominated without counting against the total number of available adult nominations. For example, in a unit in which the Scoutmaster is not a member of the Order of the Arrow, if four youth are elected, the unit committee may nominate the Scoutmaster and up to two other adults to the adult selection committee.

**Please use a separate nomination form for each adult nominee.**

A. At least one youth was elected this year. Yes No

B. Number of youth elected \_\_\_\_\_

C. Divide line B by three and round up \_\_\_\_\_

*Line C shows the number of adults that can be nominated by the unit committee, in addition to the Scoutmaster or Coach if he or she is not already a member of the Order of the Arrow.*

Troop or Team: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Nomination: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Sex: Male Female BSA ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email 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

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

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

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

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 Lodge Use Only

Unit \_\_\_\_\_ Youth election report received Yes    No    One youth elected    Yes    No

Candidacy:    Approved    Rejected    Entered into database    \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_