

Order of the Arrow Unit Election Guidelines

Preface

This booklet has been written to help make the election process as smooth as possible. These materials are in accordance with the latest procedures of the National Committee of the Order of the Arrow.

Unit Elections for the Order of the Arrow can be held anytime from January 1 to March 31.

All elections must be conducted by an Election Team led by a trained OA member from outside of the unit. This person should have had Unit Election training within the past 2 years. Other team members can come from the unit, such as a unit's OA Troop/Team Representative

The one-page *Unit Election Report* should to be scanned and, along with the Excel file containing completed information on each Scout elected, emailed within one week of the Unit Election to:

UnitElections@natsihi.org

All election results must be received **by April 15**.

The enclosed *Election and Callout Ceremony Script* must be followed, as is. It is best done by three OA members in full uniform who are familiar with their lines. In no event should this ceremony be ad-libbed or conducted in an extemporaneous manner. This circumvents the process which explains the purpose of the Order of the Arrow and the election procedures.



Youth 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.

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.

To be inducted into the Order of the Arrow, candidates must participate in an Induction Weekend.

Elections outside the registered Council. All Unit 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 Boy Scout troops and Varsity Scout Teams.*



Adult Membership Requirements

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 will make Order of the Arrow membership more meaningful in the lives of the youth membership.

Unit Selection - A unit holding its annual election for youth members may nominate adult leaders, 21 years of age or older, to be considered for membership in the Order. 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 12 months. This person must fulfill the following conditions to be considered:

- Selection is based upon the ability to perform the necessary functions, and not for recognition of service, including current or prior achievement and position.
- The individual will be an asset to the Lodge due to demonstrated skills and abilities which fulfill the purpose of the Order of the Arrow.
- The camping requirements set forth for the youth membership 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.

The *Adult Candidate Nomination Form* must be legibly filled out in its entirety.

Once completed, the *Adult Candidate Nomination Form* must be scanned and emailed to the Lodge by **April 15**. The unit should retain a copy of the form for the unit's records.

Adults can be nominated by the Unit Committee, District Chairman, Council President, or the Scout Executive. All requirements set fourth for adult leaders in units must be fulfilled. The camping requirement may be waived for District and Council Scouters at the discretion of the Lodge Adult Selection Committee.

Selection of those candidates nominated by their Unit Committee rests with the Lodge Adult Selection Committee.

The Unit Committee member submitting the nomination will be notified of their candidate's status. Candidates approved for participation in the induction process will also be notified of their selection.

Adult candidates should not register for an Induction Weekend until they have been informed that their nomination has been approved by the Lodge Adult Selection Committee.



Unit Election Preparation

1. Bring a sufficient number of blank ballots with you, in case the Unit does not provide them.
2. Bring copies of the “congratulations” package to hand out to those that are elected.
3. Bring copies of the *Pow Wow Registration* forms to hand out to current OA members.
4. Bring at least one copy of the adult candidate information with you.

Before Conducting the Election

1. Confirm that at least half (50%) of the registered active Scouts are present (ask Unit Leader or SPL). Fill in “*Number of registered active youth*” and “*Number of youth present*” on the *Unit Election Report*.

Note: If there is less than 50% present, an election cannot take place.

2. The OA team determines the minimum number of votes one must receive to be elected, as follows:
 - a. If the number of ballots turned in was even (2, 4, 6, etc.), divide this number by two and enter number on *Unit Election Report*.
 - b. If the number was odd (1, 3, 5, etc.), add one and then divide by two, and enter number on *Unit Election Report*.
3. Confirm that the Unit Leader has certified all nominees and have him/her sign the *Unit Election Report* attesting to this.
4. Are Election ballots available from the Unit Leader? If not, use the blank ballots.
5. Discuss with Unit Leader how the election results will be handled; e.g., will the election results be announced when known **OR** will the Unit Leader inform the group later (at end of meeting or during a Court of Honor) **and** who will do the announcing.
6. Only Scouts present can vote (no absentee ballots or someone voting for others).

Counting the Ballots

The votes are counted in private by the Election Team (and the Unit Leader if they insist) 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 discussion or information about the votes is to be revealed at any time.**) The second ballot is then held immediately, and if the unit still does not elect anyone, this is the final result for the year’s election.

Sample Election Ballot Session One

Ten (10) ballots are turned in and 4 boys are eligible: Carl, Fredrick, Markus, and Dexter. Carl gets 4 votes. Fredrick gets 6 votes. Markus gets 5 votes. Dexter gets 5 votes. Fredrick, Markus and Dexter were elected. Each one of them got votes from one half (or more) of the Scouts who turned ballots in. Carl will have to run again next year.

Sample Election Ballot Session Two

Eleven (11) ballots are turned in and 4 boys are eligible: Dave, Sanjay, Jonah, and Alex.

Note: Because of the odd number, round up to next even number (in this case from 11 to 12).

Dave gets 7 votes, Sanjay gets 6 votes, Jonah gets 8 votes, and Alex gets 5 votes

Dave, Sanjay, and Jonah were elected. Each one of them got votes from one-half (or more) of the Scouts who turned in ballots. Alex will have to run again next year.

After the Election is Over

1. Complete the one-page *Unit Election Report*. **Make sure to print legibly.** Scan and email this form to UnitElections@natsihi.org within 1-week of the election.
2. Ensure that the Unit Leader is/was provided with the Excel file in order to provide complete information on those Scouts that were elected. Inform him/her that all info must be provided, and the file should be emailed to UnitElections@natsihi.org within 1-week of the election.
Note: In the rare instance that the Unit Leader cannot complete an Excel file, the paper form can be used to provide candidate information. If used, fill it out **neatly** and email back with the *Unit Election Report*.
3. Provide copies of the “congratulations” package to each of those elected. If you do not have enough, ask if the Unit Leader can make extra copies and give out to those elected. If the Unit Leader cannot do this, get his/her mailing address so that packages can be sent to the Unit Leader for distribution.
4. Hand out copies of the *Pow Wow Registration* form to all current OA members in the unit.
5. If at least one Scout was elected, give the Unit Leader a copy of the adult candidate information (letter and recommendation form).
6. Thank the Unit Leader (and any helpers).
7. Do not discuss election results with anyone not a part of election process (Unit Leader is an exception). Do not throw out election ballots until you get home in order to prevent “dumpster-diving”.



Election and Callout Ceremony Script

OA Member A:

Fellow Boy Scouts, the Order of the Arrow is a national brotherhood of honor campers. It is *not* a secret society. Its purpose is to recognize and honor those campers who best live up to the Scout Oath or Promise and the 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 tradition and spirit. It emphasizes that the good scout camper is not only skilled at 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 undergo 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 patch and the sash identifies 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 in return for the honor his unit extended to him.

Scouts, you will elect representatives to our brotherhood of cheerful service, and we are here to assist you in the election. All active registered youth members of this unit, except those 21 years 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 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 just 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?

(If any questions about the Order of the Arrow: The purpose of the Order of the Arrow is fourfold: To recognize those Scout campers who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives; To develop and maintain camping traditions and spirit; To promote Scout camping; To crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.)

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 please stand as your names are called?

(Note: You can have the nominees come forward if the unit is large so Scouts can see them!)

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

Who in this group is a friend to all and 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 to 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 desire 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?

OA Member C:

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

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 unused, blank ballot. If you are new in the troop 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.

When you are finished, fold the ballot and give it to any of us.

Before you vote, are there any nominees who wish not to enter into the Brotherhood? If so, please stand and state your name. *(Cross off from Election Report those who do not wish to be considered eligible.)*

(Pass out ballots and collect them once completed. In secret, count the ballots and determine election results.)



After Election Results Are Known

Note: If the Unit Leader does NOT want the Election Results announced, skip over **OA Member A** and start with **OA Member B**.

OA Member A:

Will the following nominees please come forward:

(Call out names of those elected and have them face their fellow Scouts)

OA Member B:

That you, my fellow campers, have been chosen by your companions to become members of the Order of the Arrow reflects great credit upon you, and I congratulate you upon your election. You have impressed upon those who have lived closest to you the sincerity of your purpose to live in accordance with the high ideals of the Scout Oath. The judgment of your fellows could hardly have been mistaken.

In a short time, you will take upon yourselves another solemn obligation to be unselfish in service and devotion to the welfare of others. Your fellow Scouts elected you because they felt that you would continue your service. **Do not** let them down.

OA Member C:

My brothers in the Order, you have proven during the past year that the traditions of our brotherhood are not a collection of meaningless words. As we welcome these new candidates (the new candidate) on our journey, let us be mindful of our obligation to help and guide them (him) during the trials that lie ahead.

Your Unit Leader will be given a congratulations package. This package contains the dates of the Ordeal and when you must register to sign up for the Ordeal. The induction ceremony, called the Ordeal, is conducted at Scout camp and is the first step toward full membership.

OA Member A:

We invite our current Ordeal members to seal your membership in the Order by converting to Brotherhood.

Similar to attaining the Scout rank when you first joined your Troop, as you learned more about Scouting and your interest grew, it was natural to progress to Tenderfoot, 2nd Class, and beyond. So is the progression to Brotherhood in the Order of the Arrow. Look back on the obligation you undertook at your Ordeal. Do you find yourself living to the purposes of the Order of the Arrow?

If so, the Brotherhood is an opportunity for members to evaluate their unit service since their induction, to contemplate their future service to the Lodge, and to reaffirm their belief in the high purposes of the Order.

To our brothers in the Order, we invite you to convert to Brotherhood and possibly serve during one of the upcoming Ordeal weekends as an Elangomat or on staff. We have information about all of these opportunities. Please see us afterwards to get your copy.



Unit Election Ballot Sheet

		Name			Name
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
		Elect All			Elect All
		Name			Name
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
Yes	No		Yes	No	
		Elect All			Elect All