



National Policy on 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 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 disabilities. The Order of the Arrow recognizes Scouting for youth with disabilities, and elections should be held in

these units. Any Arrowman with disabilities who is classified as a youth member of the unit shall be considered a youth (voting) member of the Order of the Arrow regardless of age. Scouts with disabilities must meet all other membership requirements.

When inducting a Scout with a disability, 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 assure a meaningful induction for the Scout.

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 up to one adult for every 50 registered active youth members to the lodge adult selection committee, composed of the lodge adviser, the chairman of the council camping committee on which the lodge adviser serves, and the lodge staff adviser. Recommendations of the adult selection committee, with the approval of the Scout executive, serving as the 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 function to help the Order fulfill its purposes, and not for recognition of service, including current or prior achievement and position.
- 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 leaders' 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 recognition. Election into the Order should take place only when the adult's job in Boy Scouting or Varsity Scouting will make the 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 membership 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 a 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 and inductions outside the registered council. Order of the Arrow elections are held in qualified troops and teams only under the direction of the lodge in the council where 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.*

In virtually all cases, newly elected candidates for membership in the Order, both youth and adult, should complete the Ordeal and be inducted into the Order by the lodge that serves the council in which their unit is chartered. Under special circumstances, newly elected candidates may complete the Ordeal outside their own council if the following conditions are met:

1. The unit leader requests the change in Ordeal completion in advance and in writing to both the registered council lodge and to the lodge where the induction is requested.
2. The lodge of the council where the unit is registered gives permission to the unit leader in writing and sends a copy to the lodge where induction is requested.
3. The out-of-council lodge charges the newly elected candidates the cost of an Ordeal sash, an *Order of the Arrow Handbook*, and food/facilities **only**. The Arrowman inducted into the Order outside his registered council lodge should not receive a lodge flap patch, neckerchief, or other OA specialty items, or a membership card from the out-of-council lodge that inducts him. Proof of successful completion of the Ordeal and induction should be given to the new member in the form of a letter from the inducting lodge, with a copy mailed to the registered council lodge of the newly inducted Arrowman.
4. Upon return to his registered council, the newly inducted Arrowman should present proof of induction to the lodge in that council, pay his dues and other appropriate

fees for special items unique to that lodge, and receive a membership card from his registered council lodge.

5. No Arrowman is authorized to wear the OA flap patch of a lodge he is not a member of, even though he may have been inducted into the Order by that lodge.
6. Any candidate desiring to be called out at a resident camp or other event outside his own council may have his unit leader make the arrangements as described in items 1 and 2 above. The candidate would then be inducted into the Order by his registered council lodge at a later date, unless other arrangements are made in advance to also be inducted out of council as described in items 1 through 4 above.

Unit Election Procedures

1. The lodge shall determine the time of year unit elections will be held and should inform unit leaders of this by mail well in advance. The lodge, through the unit elections committee, should work with the unit leader in establishing the actual time and place to conduct the election.
2. Hold the election at the time and place determined by the unit leader, and have Boy Scouts or Varsity Scouts assembled with their unit leader ready to elect candidates. The Order should be represented by a two- or three-member team from the lodge or chapter unit elections committee.
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 A1.3. 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*. 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.
 - 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, 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 election 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 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 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 is dropped and he no longer is a candidate. To become a candidate again, he must be reelected. The executive committee of the lodge may extend the one-year limit between election and induction if the candidate is ill or there are other unusual circumstances.