

Guide to Unit Elections



Scouting's National Honor Society

ORDER OF THE ARROW
GUIDE TO UNIT ELECTIONS

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

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Use of This Guide

This guide provides information on Order of the Arrow unit elections to both members and non-members. It can be distributed to unit leaders and others who want to know the policies regarding unit elections and how unit elections are conducted. All of the content in this guide is taken from the *Guide to Inductions*. However, the *Guide to Inductions* is not made available to non-members because it contains information on the Order's ceremonies.

Lodges and chapters are encouraged to copy and reference sections of the *Guide to Unit Elections* and provide them to officers, committees, and advisers that need them. Sections, lodges, and chapters also may extract and reference paragraphs or sections for use in their publications and training documents. This guide elaborates on the broad objectives and policies contained in the *Order of the Arrow Handbook* and in the *Guide for Officers and Advisers*. It has been written to support and expand on the Lodge Leadership Development conference (LLD) training sessions concerning inductions.

Feedback

You are encouraged to submit your comments, suggestions, and questions about the *Guide to Unit Elections* to the national Order of the Arrow committee by sending an email to ice@oa-bsa.org.

MANAGING UNIT ELECTIONS

The lodge is responsible for conducting unit elections in every troop and team in the council. All unit members, including non-OA members, elect those Scouts who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives to become OA members. In this way, membership is controlled by the youth in their own units and not by those who are already Arrowmen.

The Unit Elections Committee

The unit elections committee sends out information to all Scoutmasters and Varsity Scout Coaches regarding membership in the OA and the election procedures. It trains unit elections teams, schedules visits of elections teams to units, ensures that the teams conducting the elections are well-trained and in proper uniform when conducting the elections, and records the results of the elections.

The lodge chief appoints a youth Arrowman to be the unit elections committee chairman. The unit elections chairman must have an adviser who is appointed by the lodge adviser. If the lodge uses chapters, the lodge chief, vice chief, or unit elections chairman works with the chapters to ensure that each chapter also elects or appoints a youth Arrowman to manage unit elections at the chapter level. The chapter unit elections chairman must have an adult adviser who is appointed by the chapter adviser. Chapter unit elections chairmen form the core of the lodge unit elections committee.

The unit elections committee works closely with the lodge officers responsible for membership records, OA troop/team representatives, call-outs, and Ordeals.

The unit elections committee performs the following functions:

- Reviews the previous unit elections committee's evaluation and decides how to make improvements.
- Sets a time period for elections, beginning with determining the time of the year when unit elections will be held. The dates must be set well in advance of the start of the election period so that units and lodge/chapter committees can properly plan. Factors to be considered when setting the time period include the dates of Ordeals and other chapter, lodge, district, and council Scouting events, the school calendar, and holidays. A long election period requires maintaining teams over several months which some chapters and lodges may find difficult. However, a short election period requires the elections teams to do more elections in a shorter period thus increasing the burden on the teams and requiring more teams.
- Informs units well in advance of the election period by sending an email/letter announcing unit elections to the troop or team adult leader with a copy to the unit's OA troop/team representative and adviser. (Refer to the Sample Letter Announcing Unit Elections resource.) The email/letter should set out the time of the year when elections will be held, describe the purpose of the elections, provide the elections rules and procedures, and outline the membership requirements for youth and adults. The letter should advise unit leaders how they can schedule an election and include an Adult Candidate Nomination Form. (Refer to the Adult Candidate Nomination Form resource.) It may be useful to speak to unit leaders at a district roundtable, reminding them of the email/letter. Commonly, there will be some unit leaders who fail to respond to election scheduling requests. This may be caused by an incorrect address, forgetfulness, or the inherent limitations of email. A follow-up email or phone call may be necessary to receive a response from the unit leader. Unit leaders who are resistant to holding a unit election should be contacted by the chapter or lodge adviser, who should explain the benefits of the Order to the unit and its members.

- Organizes and trains unit elections teams through recruitment, training, and motivation. Serving on a unit elections team is an excellent way to give a young Arrowman the opportunity to assume a position of responsibility and leadership. The unit elections committee should pay special attention to the Order of the Arrow members who are participating in unit elections for the first time and ensure that the training is well-organized and fun. Training sessions cover the elections process, rules and guidelines and help ensure consistency between election teams. The sample Unit Elections Ceremony helps ensure consistency. The best elections teams can deliver an accurate, professional, and meaningful election ceremony and keep the attention of the unit, allowing for effective communication. The training sessions can be conducted at chapter meetings, in conjunction with lodge executive committee meetings or a Lodge Leadership Development Conference (LLDC), or at a separate training event. Food or refreshments could be provided and a game could be played during training sessions. (Refer to the sample Unit Elections Ceremony and Unit Elections Team Training resources.) Supplemental practice can help make sure each speaking part is fully memorized, and this will lead to well-informed, meaningful elections.
- Recruits and trains extra team members so that enough team members will be available to handle the elections when the units request them. Each unit election typically requires two or three members. At any given election, some of the team members may be unable to participate because of other activities.
- Offers team members the opportunity to provide feedback to the unit elections committee on the quality of support they received and uses this information to improve unit elections the following year.
- Sets up a system to contact every troop and team leader in the council and schedule a unit election for all troops and teams. If a unit has eligible Scouts but does not desire to have an election, the chapter or lodge adviser should contact the unit leader and attempt to discover how the OA can better serve this unit. If the unit leader receives better service and support from the Order in the future, the unit leader may be more receptive to having unit elections.
- Contacts the various elections teams well in advance to schedule elections. Works hard to avoid situations where an Arrowman is called to help with an election at the last minute and limits the number of elections each team member is expected to conduct.
- Conducts all unit elections at troop or team meetings. The reason for this is participation: more Scouts attend meetings than summer camp and not all units go to council summer camps. This means more Scouts have the opportunity to vote and there is a greater chance that all those eligible will be present.
- Prepares a handout about upcoming Ordeal weekends that the unit elections teams can leave with unit leaders, OA troop/team representatives and advisers, and newly elected candidates (after they have been called out). This handout should give the dates, times, locations, and contact information for all upcoming Ordeals.
- Sets up a system for quickly and reliably transmitting the unit elections results which are recorded on the Unit Election Report form (Refer to the Unit Election Report resource.) to the appropriate lodge/chapter officers. Many chapters/lodges use email and then mail a backup copy to ensure that the information is received. Information on candidates should be entered in the lodge records as soon as possible after the election with "Candidate" entered where the membership level is recorded.
- Sets up a system to transmit adult nominations to the lodge adult selection committee and communicates the committee's decisions back to the lodge/chapter and units. Adults may not be called out until the lodge adult selection committee approves them. It is important to maintain the confidentiality of adult nominations to avoid embarrassment if a nominated adult is not recommended by the lodge adult selection committee or is not approved by the Scout executive.

- Provides information on youth and adult candidates to:
 - The call-out teams. The names of adults to be called out should be received from the lodge adult selection committee.
 - The lodge chief, chapter chiefs, lodge/chapter secretaries, and their advisers. A list of the candidates' names, unit numbers, email addresses, home addresses, and telephone numbers so that they can encourage candidates' attendance at the Ordeal.
 - The Ordeal committee
 - The OA troop/team representatives and advisers
- Prepares a written elections evaluation report after the completion of all unit elections.

Lodge Adult Selection Committee

The lodge adviser, the chairman of the council committee on which the lodge adviser serves, and the lodge staff adviser serve as the lodge adult selection committee. The committee reviews the nominations for adult membership received from the troop and team committees and for adults serving in council and district positions. Those nominated adults that meet the membership requirements for adult unit leaders and council and district adult leaders may be recommended to the Scout executive by the lodge adult selection committee. With the approval of the Scout executive, who serves as Supreme Chief of the Fire, those adults will become candidates for induction.

To ensure that the committee has time to act, the lodge adviser may set a minimum period by which all elections must be held before each call-out or Ordeal. Those deadlines should be emphasized in the materials that are provided to chapters and units. Some lodge adult selection committees may want chapter advisers to review nominations before the committee acts. Adults should not be entered into the lodge records as candidates until after the lodge adult selection committee nominates and the Scout executive approves them. Call-out teams need to be provided with the names of approved adults so that they do not call out adults whose nominations were not approved by the committee or Scout executive.

OA Troop/Team Representative Committee

The OA troop/team representative committee should play an important part in the unit elections process. The committee is an excellent source of manpower to help conduct unit elections. The committee should provide OA troop/team representatives' and advisers' contact information to the unit elections committee. The use of email is an excellent way to communicate with the OA troop/team representatives and advisers. The committee should also provide the following support:

- Contact each OA troop/team representative and adviser at the start of the unit elections season and ask them to encourage their unit leader to schedule an election and to review the elections procedures, which they should provide.
- Follow up with the OA troop/team representatives and advisers from units that have not yet scheduled an election.
- Send the OA troop/team representatives and advisers information on the date, time, and location of all upcoming call-out and Ordeal weekends. Have them promote and encourage the newly elected candidates and OA members in his unit to attend.

The OA Troop/Team Representative

The unit election is an excellent way to strengthen the role of the OA troop/team representative. To be successful in this position, a Scout needs to establish a robust link with the lodge/chapter so that information and resources will flow both ways. The unit elections team should coordinate much of the election effort with the OA troop/team representative providing him the opportunity for leadership as well as offering all the assistance he requires. The OA troop/team representative, with the support of his adviser should:

- Ensure that his troop or team schedules a unit election.

- Talk to all youth members about the purpose of the Order of the Arrow and the criteria his fellow Scouts should use in voting for those who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law.
- Help maintain excitement among eligible Scouts before the election.
- Contact the members of his troop or team a few days before the unit election to ensure that the maximum number of Scouts will participate.
- Contact the OA members in his unit, both youth and adults, a few days before the unit election and remind them to attend the election in full uniform with sash.
- Assist in conducting the election if needed.
- Help complete the Unit Election Evaluation Form (see resources) and send it to the lodge/chapter if requested by the unit elections team.

Unit Elections Team

The unit elections team needs to be prepared and do an excellent job when it visits a unit. Most of the members of the unit will never become members of the Order of the Arrow. Their experience with the Order of the Arrow during the unit elections may be their only exposure to the Order. The performance of the unit elections team can create a very positive image of the Order of the Arrow with both the youth and adult members of the unit. The team must ensure that elections are meaningful experiences for the Scouts and leaders, for Arrowmen in the unit who are conducting the election, and for the new candidates being elected.

Recruit the team members well in advance of the election and practice the election presentation until all the members of the team know their roles. The Order should be represented by a two- or three-member team from the lodge or chapter unit elections committee. All elections team members must be trained and in proper uniform during the election.

Three important resources that should be used by all unit elections teams are included in this guide: the Unit Election Team Checklist (things the unit elections team should do before, during, and after each unit election), the Unit Elections Rules and Procedures, and the Unit Elections Frequently Asked Questions.

Immediately after the election the Unit Election Report (see resources) is completed and signed by the elections team members to certify the results.

A Unit Elections Ceremony that the unit elections team is strongly encouraged to use is found in the resources. This script provides a standard presentation for all unit elections teams to implement. It addresses all of the eligibility requirements and procedures for unit elections.

Videos for use by the unit elections team are available for download on the national OA website at www.oa-bsa.org. These videos can be used as part of the unit elections to provide information about the Order of the Arrow and explain the unit elections process.

Evaluation

The feedback received during the unit election process allows the lodge and chapter to learn, not only about the quality of their own unit elections but also about the regard in which the Order of the Arrow is held among the units it serves.

After each unit election, the OA troop/team representative for the unit, with input from his adviser and unit leader, should fill out the Unit Election Evaluation Form (see resources) and return it directly to the unit elections committee chairman. The form should be provided with a self-addressed, stamped envelope or a website or email address where the evaluation can be submitted.

After the election season the unit elections committee should examine all available information with the goal of improving the quality of the presentations the next year and the overall election process. The committee should prepare a written report that includes the feedback received from the elections teams, unit leaders, the OA troop/team representative committee and the lodge adult selection committee. It should include an evaluation and critique of the elections process as well as specific recommendations for the next year. By implementing the recommendations from the evaluation process the lodge will realize continuous improvement from year to year.

SAMPLE LETTER ANNOUNCING ELECTIONS

To: Troop/Team Leaders
From: Order of the Arrow W.W.W., _____ Lodge
Subject: Annual Unit Elections

The Order of the Arrow is Scouting's National Honor Society. It recognizes those who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and, through that recognition, cause others to conduct themselves in such a way that warrants similar recognition, to promote camping, to develop leaders, and to crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.

Each Boy Scout troop or Varsity Scout team with qualified Scouts is urged to hold an election not later than _____, to select candidates for an Ordeal to be held at _____ on _____. The date and place of the election are selected by you, as unit leader. An election team from the Order of the Arrow will be present to conduct the election, which should take 20 to 30 minutes.

Youth Membership Qualifications

1. A Boy Scout or Varsity Scout who holds the First Class rank or higher, is under the age of 21, and is registered as an active member of the troop or team may, with the approval of his unit leader, be nominated for election. Prior to the annual election, the unit leader must certify the nominee's Scout spirit and youth membership qualifications.
2. The youth must have experienced 15 nights of Boy Scout camping while registered with a troop or team within the two years immediately prior to the election. The 15 nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of at least five consecutive nights of overnight camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America. Only five nights of the long-term camp may be credited toward the 15-night camping requirement. The balance of the camping (10 nights) must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps of, at most, three nights each.

Voting for youth candidates will be based on their spirit of brotherhood, cheerfulness (no matter how tiresome their duties), and a willingness to give unselfish and wholehearted service to others at all times.

Adult Membership Qualifications

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 registered unit adults, 21 years of age or older, 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 12 months. Recommendations of the adult selection committee, with the approval of the Scout executive, will be candidates for induction, provided the following conditions are fulfilled:

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

A return postcard is enclosed for you to use in notifying the council service center of the date and place set aside for the election of candidates. It should be held at a regularly scheduled unit meeting or camping experience. Every effort should be made to have 100 percent attendance of both youths and adults at this meeting. The lodge [chapter] election team will contact you to confirm the details for the election and to answer any questions you might have.

Respectfully Yours,

Lodge Chief

Lodge Adviser

UNIT ELECTIONS RULES AND PROCEDURES

The definitive rules and procedures for unit elections are contained in the *Guide for Officers and Advisers* pages 20-23. In case of any conflict or ambiguity between items contained in the *Guide to Inductions* or the *Guide to Unit Elections* and items in the *Guide for Officers and Advisers*, always refer to the *Guide for Officers and Advisers* as the definitive document.

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 in an Order of the Arrow unit election; this includes assistant Scoutmasters and assistant Varsity Scout Coaches who are 18, 19 or 20 years old.

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, an assistant scoutmaster away at college who participates in some unit activities when home, such as campouts, camporees, or occasional unit meetings, 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 are only to be held in troops and teams; elections are not to be held in Venturing crews or Cub Scout packs. 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. All elections must be conducted by the OA lodge of the council in which the troop or team is chartered. No unit may visit outside its council and hold an OA unit election under the auspices of the OA lodge of another council.

Call-outs should be conducted by the OA lodge of the council in which the troop or team is chartered. It is possible for a visiting troop or team to have their elected candidates called out at an out-of-council summer camp if the lodge serving the camp is willing to conduct the call-out. The unit leader must present 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 request. Following the unit's return, the home lodge chief and lodge adviser must receive confirmation of the call-out.

Newly elected candidates for membership in the Order must complete the Ordeal and be inducted into the Order by the lodge that serves the council in which the unit is chartered. This allows the candidates to bond with their contemporaries as they go through the Ordeal and creates a positive leadership environment in which they can progress. 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.

Unit Election Rules

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 Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach 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 OA election team members must be trained and in proper uniform during the election.

3. Before the election, the unit leader must verify to the OA unit elections team 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 and the election should be rescheduled. The number of registered active members and the number present are entered in the spaces provided on the Unit Elections Report (see the resources section). If the unit leader is a member of the Order, he or she 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 unit elections 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 unit elections team.
4. The unit leader provides a list of 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 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 contained in the resource section, 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 who 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 the earliest possible time, either at a resident camp, a camporee, or a special ceremony.

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.

Adult recommendations. 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 registered unit adults, 21 years of age or older, to the lodge adult selection committee for approval to be candidates for induction. 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. The lodge should set up a system to transmit adult nominations to the lodge adult selection committee and the committee's decisions back to the lodge, chapter, and units. Adults may not be called out until the lodge adult selection committee recommends and the Scout executive approves them. Maintain the confidentiality of adult recommendations to avoid embarrassment if a nominated adult is not recommended by the lodge adult selection committee or is not approved by the Scout executive.

Membership requirements. Consult the *Guide for Officers and Advisers* for youth, adult and professional membership qualifications.

Honorary and life membership. Honorary or life membership in the Order of the Arrow are not allowed. See the *Guide for Officers and Advisers*.

UNIT ELECTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The definitive rules and procedures for unit elections are contained in the *Guide for Officers and Advisers*, pages 20–23. In case of any conflict or ambiguity between the *Guide to Inductions* or the *Guide to Unit Elections* and the *Guide for Officers and Advisers*, always refer to the *Guide for Officers and Advisers* as the definitive document.

Q. When does a Scout have to earn his First Class Rank to become eligible for election?

A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

... hold the First Class rank or higher of the Boy Scouts of America ...

To ensure that the Scout will be able to handle the challenges of the Ordeal weekend and to uphold the Order's standing as Scouting's national honor society, each candidate must have passed a board of review for the First Class rank before the election is held. Any Scout who has passed his First Class board of review meets this requirement, even if the award has not been formally presented, such as at a court of honor.

Q. Can a Scout use the same camping nights towards the requirements of Camping merit badge and for the OA camping requirement.

A. Yes. While the Boy Scout advancement program often prohibits one action or event from counting towards two different requirements, camping nights can be counted towards both Boy Scout advancement and the OA camping requirement.

Q. A Scout who recently joined my troop camped a lot in his previous troop. Should that camping be counted when deciding if he can be listed on the election ballot for my troop's unit election?

A. Yes. All camping done by a Scout while registered with a troop or team counts towards the camping portion of the membership qualifications, as long as the camping was within the last two years.

Q. A Scout in my troop is also registered in a Venturing crew. Can camping trips with the crew count towards the camping requirement?

A. Since the Scout is registered with the troop, and the camping with the crew is "under the auspices of the BSA," these camping trips while the youth member is also a Boy Scout can count towards the camping requirement.

Q. If a Scout goes to summer camp and a jamboree in the same summer, how do these count towards the camping requirement?

A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

Have experienced 15 nights of Boy Scout camping while registered with a troop or team within the two years immediately prior to the election. **The 15 nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of at least five consecutive nights of overnight camping,** approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America. **Only five nights of the long-term camp may be credited toward the 15-night camping requirement;** the balance of the camping (10 nights) must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps of, at most, three nights each. *[emphasis added]*

Only one long term camp can be used towards the camping requirement. For a Scout who attends summer camp and a jamboree in the same year, five nights of the time at summer camp or at the jamboree (but not both) can be used towards the camping requirement. Ten more nights of short-term camp would also be required to meet the camping requirement.

Q. Does the long term camp have to be at my council's camp?

- A. Camping at a council's own camp(s) is not part of the national requirements for eligibility for election to the Order of the Arrow. Any "long-term camp ... approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America" meets this portion of the camping requirement.

Councils and lodges should conduct elections in any troop or team that requests one, without regard to where the unit attends summer camp.

Q. What does "... under the auspices of the Boy Scouts of America" mean in the camping requirement?

- A. It means: Camping conducted within the guidelines of the Boy Scouts of America, amongst other things, to conduct the program in accordance with the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and all youth protection guidelines, and, if water sports are conducted, using Safe Swim Defense and the buddy system, using a Tour Plan, and all other policies in force not specifically listed here. Ultimately, the local council is the final arbiter of whether an encampment is in compliance and therefore under the auspices of the BSA.

Q. I went on several camping trips when I was registered as a Webelos den leader and before I registered as an assistant Scoutmaster. Can those trips count towards the OA camping requirement?

- A. The Order of the Arrow's membership eligibility requirements focus on youth Boy Scouts, and the camping requirement must be fulfilled through camping done while a Boy Scout. Because of this, time spent camping as a Cub Scout does not count towards OA eligibility. This makes sense when we consider another requirement, which is that election candidates be First Class Scouts, and work towards the First Class requirements cannot begin until a boy becomes a Boy Scout.

Similarly, camping done by unit adults only counts towards OA membership when the adults are registered as Boy Scout or Varsity Team leaders. Thus, camping done while registered as a Webelos den leader does not count towards OA eligibility (unless the adult is also registered in a troop or team at the time).

Q. We have an adult assistant Scoutmaster who is two nights shy of the camping requirement. Youth elections are next week. Most likely two Scouts will be elected (one of them the assistant Scoutmaster's son). Five days after the youth election the assistant Scoutmaster will have met the camping requirement. Can the troop committee nominate the assistant Scoutmaster several days after the youth election?

- A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

"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..."

In many units, the unit committee meets once or twice a month, so adult nominations may follow the youth election by as much as a few weeks. Adults must meet the eligibility requirements when the unit committee makes its decision on whom to nominate, not at the time of the youth election.

Q. Do youths have to be present for an election, or can they participate by phone or Skype or vote through an absentee ballot?

A. All youths must be physically present to vote in a unit election. Voting by phone, Skype, absentee ballot, etc. is not permitted in unit elections.

Q. Do youths have to be present to be placed on the election ballot and be elected?

A. No. All Scouts who meet the eligibility requirements should be included on the election ballot, even if some of these Scouts are not present when the election is being held.

Q. As a unit leader, how do I determine which youths are active and thus count for purposes of determining if a quorum is present for an election?

A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

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 (including assistant Scoutmasters and assistant Varsity Scout Coaches who are 18, 19 or 20 years old) 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.

As an example, a Scout who hasn't participated in unit activities in several months and who cannot be reached to confirm that they have dropped out of the unit should not be counted as a member of the unit when deciding if at least 50 percent of the registered active unit membership is present.

Q. Can a troop/team conduct its own election?

A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

Induction: Election to Ordeal

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 teams must be trained and in proper uniform during the election.

The lodge is responsible for making sure that election teams are properly trained, so it's important that troops and teams not conduct their own elections.

Q. What's the status in the Order of assistant Scoutmasters and assistant Varsity Scout Coaches who are under age 21?

A. Young adults ages 18 through 20 are considered youth members of the Order of the Arrow. Because of this, assistant Scoutmasters and assistant Varsity Scout Coaches who are 18, 19 or 20 years old and who meet the youth eligibility requirements should be included on election ballots whenever an election is held in a troop or team, and these young adults should be allowed to participate in the

election in the same manner as youth members under age 18. Once inducted, these young adults may participate fully in the Order of the Arrow as youth members, until their 21st birthday.

Q. Can a unit use pre-printed ballots in an election?

- 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 is inappropriate 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" be included as a choice on a pre-printed ballot?

- A. Yes. 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 so having an "all of the above" box on a pre-printed ballot is appropriate. Here is a sample:

<p>Please place a check next to the name of each candidate who you believe is worthy to become a member of the Order of the Arrow.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Jeff Scout</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> José Star</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dhairya Eagle</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> All of the above</p> <p>If you feel that no one is worthy, turn in an unmarked ballot.</p> <p>If you 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.</p>
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Q. Can a unit leader or council add requirements to the national OA requirements for election?

- A. No, a Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach (or unit committee, district, council, chapter or lodge) has no authority to change the requirements for election to the Order of the Arrow, just as they have no authority to change the Eagle Scout or other rank requirements. However, a Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach does have the responsibility to certify that the troop's or team's Scouts have met the national eligibility requirements before submitting their names for the ballot for the unit's election.

Q. What is the unit leader's role in a unit election?

- A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

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 immediately **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.

Induction: Election to Ordeal

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 Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach holds the responsibility of certifying a Scout's eligibility before placement on an Order of the Arrow election ballot. The unit leader's certification is as of the date of the election, and any Scout who meets the camping and other requirements as of that date should be listed on the election ballot. This approval is not one of preferential treatment or specific selection for membership rooted in the unit leader's own vision, but one of qualifying a candidate for eligibility. By including a Scout's name on the list of those whose names should appear on an election ballot, the unit leader certifies that:

- The Scout is a currently registered active member of the troop or team
- The Scout exhibits Scout spirit by living in accordance with the Scout Oath and Law
- The Scout fulfills all other Order of the Arrow membership requirements

Clearly, the unit leader's approval is earned through merit in Scouting. The unit leader has two roles with the OA: an administrative certification that the objective requirements are met and a more judgment-oriented one with the Scout spirit requirement that the Scout, in his or her opinion, has been a "good Scout" and lives up to the obligations taken in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. This requirement helps to uphold the high standard that OA membership warrants.

Q. Can a unit leader adjust the results of the youth election results before the results are announced?

- A. After the youths have voted, the unit leader cannot adjust the results of the election. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says that lodge rules must include this standard rule:

Rule III.A. The requirements for membership in this lodge are as stated in the current printing of the *Order of the Arrow Handbook* and the *Order of the Arrow Guide for Officers and Advisers*.

Starting on page 22 of the *Guide for Officers and Advisers*, the "Induction: Election to Ordeal" section details the procedure to be used for elections. Voting by Scoutmasters or adjusting the results of the youth votes is not part of the procedure and therefore is not allowed.

However, the unit leader is **not** an ineffective actor with regard to OA unit elections. Here is what one successful, long-term Scoutmaster did. He reports that he was never disappointed with the wisdom of the voters:

I made the OA unit election a yearlong process of encouraging the Scouts in the troop to participate in the Order's activities, and always made sure a youth member (the Troop OA Representative) got up and explained what the event was being held, and ensured that our Patrol Leaders' Council had a copy of the chapter and lodge calendar to be sure that the PLC did not schedule any events in conflict with the published OA calendar. This calendar exercise alone put the OA events front and center in the minds of the troop youth leaders once a month.

Beyond talking about the OA and their events, I would follow up the Troop Rep's presentation by telling the troop "why" the OA did these things. Often, I would include discussions of service and the concept of servant leadership in my Scoutmaster minutes.

Then, six weeks before the election, as soon as our youths scheduled the chapter election team to come to the troop, I would begin a series of short comments in each meeting or campout describing the OA and what it was about. It went like this:

Six weeks out: Bring in a copy of James Fennimore Cooper's book, *The Last of the Mohicans* and explain that the OA had roots in great American literature. See what they know about it.

Five weeks out: Show a video I compiled on *The Last of the Mohicans* movie...and take questions about the Delaware Tribe...Get out a map of the Great Northeast and show the range of the Delaware.

Four weeks out: Introduce the concept of service. Bring in my 1914 handbook and show the Scouts the chapter on chivalry and let them see the original drawing of a boy helping an old lady cross the street.

Three weeks out: Remind them of their slogan, to do a good turn daily, and see if any Scouts have examples of ones they might share with the group. Ask them to be sure to do this in the coming week.

Two weeks out: Talk about the OA and ask three or four Scouts who are members to speak for two to three minutes each about what to look for in a member, drawing on the above. Ask the Scouts to give you specific examples of acts of kindness that have been performed by the troop members. Include as many Scouts in this as you can... you can suggest those squeamish or awkward Scouts who you believe may be overlooked, but you feel are worthy. Scouts will know if you are honest in this... or campaigning, so just speak from your heart as the Scouts do most of the talking about their fellows.

One week out: Specifically talk with them about the ballot, post the draft ballot so all can see, and be sure they come see the advancement committee member present, if we do not show them as qualified, when they think they may be. Address the "popularity contest" aspect of the election as something to avoid, and call on their higher angels to identify each person who lives the Scout Oath and Law in the meeting.

Election night: Introduce the election team and reiterate the purpose of the OA. Explain that the OA is the only organization in Scouting where the non-members choose the members, and reinforce that I have authorized this ballot because I believe these Scouts are qualified and worthy of consideration.

Of course, every situation is different, but over the years, our troop's Scouts chose a wide range of Scouts, but I was never disappointed. I made it a year round education process, so never was tempted to have to adjust the will of the Scouts. I spent my time adjusting their thinking to what would serve the troop and the OA best. It worked.

Q. How do you keep the elections from being a popularity contest? Some Scouts who meet the requirements and definitely have the qualities of a true Boy Scout are not elected. They meet the qualifications year after year. Even the other Scouts are surprised certain Scouts are never elected.

A. The unit elections chair from the local lodge or chapter might be invited to come and talk to the Scouts about the Order of the Arrow, rather than relying solely on the OA Elections video. Nationally, many of our most successful chapters and lodges have noticed that this practice, especially when the unit leader is also invited to comment, makes those in the troop or team recognize the founding ideals of the OA and helps to take away consideration of other factors.

In May 2008 the Order of the Arrow distributed an Operations Update which included a Unit Elections section on page 3. Its recommendations have been used effectively in a number of troops and teams around the country. Here is a quote from the Operations Update to further address the question:

Electing candidates from medium to large size troops and teams can be a challenge. The basic problem is that many Scouts, especially the older ones, don't really know the younger Scouts and are reluctant to vote for them. This can be a significant problem especially with youths who are quiet and introverted.

Noticing their low election results, a number of Scoutmasters have developed a procedure to directly address this situation. It has produced significant improvements in the election results in these units. Some Scoutmasters announce the youth's rank, number of nights of camping, and service hours as the names are read. Others include similar information on the ballot of names. Another technique is to print the individual Scouting record of each candidate, listing his name, school grade, rank, number of merit badges, summer camp years, camping nights, leadership positions held, and special awards or events attended. Regardless of the procedure used, the purpose of this is to help the unit members know something about the candidates before they vote. It works and produces much better election results.

The Scoutmaster still decides the names to appear on the ballot, listing only those who have demonstrated Scout spirit and who meet the OA eligibility requirements. A Scout whose name is being withheld because of Scout spirit needs to be told why in advance. Also, some Scouts may not be interested in becoming OA members. The Scoutmaster should offer the eligible candidates the opportunity to "opt out" of being on the annual ballot prior to its printing.

This procedure has been tried and tested. It produces 50% to 100% better election results and is worthy of your consideration.

Q. Can you help me better understand the number of unit adults who can be nominated when a troop/team conducts an election?

A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

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, composed of the lodge adviser, the chairman of the council committee on which the lodge adviser serves, and the lodge staff adviser. 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.

So, as long as the adults meet the camping and other requirements, this chart can be used:

No. of Youths Elected	Maximum No. of Adults That Can be Nominated	No. of Youths Elected	Maximum No. of Adults That Can be Nominated
0	0	7	3 + unit leader
1	1 + unit leader	8	3 + unit leader
2	1 + unit leader	9	3 + unit leader
3	1 + unit leader	10	4 + unit leader
4	2 + unit leader	11	4 + unit leader
5	2 + unit leader	12	4 + unit leader
6	2 + unit leader	And so forth	

Q. What is the role of the unit leader (Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach) and the unit committee chairman in signing the adult nomination form? Do they decide which adults get nominated or does the troop/team committee make the decision?

A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

“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, composed of the lodge adviser, the chairman of the council committee on which the lodge adviser serves and the lodge staff adviser.”

The unit committee decides which adults are nominated, and the unit leader and unit committee chair sign on behalf of the committee and its decision.

Q. What should our lodge do if a Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach mistakenly certifies a Scout as eligible for election when he is not eligible and that Scout is subsequently called out?

- A. If a Scout was incorrectly elected, but not called out, do not add him to the list of those to be called out. Have the Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach counsel the Scout and explain to him that a mistake was made. Encourage the Scout to remain involved and committed so that he may appear on next year’s ballot.

If a Scout was incorrectly called out but not inducted, do not induct him, and, again, have that Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach conference.

If a Scout was incorrectly inducted, the Scout should be allowed to retain membership in the Order of the Arrow. The Scout should be counseled about the circumstances with guidance from his Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach and the chapter or lodge adviser so that they can help the Scout mature, participate, and be successful in the Order.

Q. I’m a chapter adviser. A chapter election team recently conducted an election for a troop in my chapter and three Scouts were elected. The day after the election, the Scoutmaster contacted me to ask for a supplemental election because he accidentally left some Scouts off the list of those eligible for election. Can the chapter arrange for another election?

- A. Election policy is set by the national OA committee to ensure uniformity across the nation. One longstanding policy is that a unit may have only one election per year. While it's regrettable that the Scoutmaster did not provide a complete list of eligible Scouts for the election that was held, national policy does not permit an additional election to be held to address the issue.

UNIT ELECTION TEAM TRAINING

GUIDE TO UNIT ELECTIONS

SESSION LENGTH: 50 Minutes

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Know the rules and regulations of unit elections
- Be able to effectively run a unit election

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- Chalkboard/white board/flip chart
- Copies of handouts
 - Sample Letter Announcing Unit Elections
 - Unit Elections Rules and Procedures
 - Unit Elections Frequently Asked Questions
 - Unit Election Team Checklist
 - Unit Elections Ceremony
 - Unit Elections Report
 - Unit Elections Evaluation Form
 - Adult Candidate Nomination Form
- Copies of all the relevant unit elections documents
- *Guide to Inductions* and *Guide to Unit Elections*
- Contact information for the lodge/chapter unit elections chairman and adviser



TRAINER PREPARATION

TRAINER TIP: The material presented below was written to start in a lecture format. The rules and regulations are best presented in a straightforward manner since there can be no real deviation or debate. The Performance section, however, should be a class driven experience.

Prior to the arrival of the participants, display on the chalkboard, flip chart, or PowerPoint: The Name of the Session, Your Name, Contact Information, Learning Objectives, Review materials needed.

Depending on the resources available in your training venue you may also opt to use the “Conducting a Quality Unit Election” and “Electing New Members Unit Elections” videos. Adjust the session activities and length depending on your choices. These videos are available for download at www.oa-bsa.org/pages/content/lodge-program-resource-videos.

SESSION NARRATIVE

INTRODUCTION:

5 MINUTES

[Introduce yourself and, depending on group size, ask participants to introduce themselves giving their name, chapter, where they are from. Review the learning objectives.]

Welcome. The purpose of this session is to prepare all of you to be effective unit election team members. We are working under the assumption that your chapter chief and unit elections chairman have scheduled unit elections and now they need a prepared unit election team to go out and perform the election.

That team is you. With all the units in our lodge and chapter requesting elections at any given moment each one of you needs to be prepared to make the election happen. So, let's dive right into this.

THE RULES:

10 MINUTES

[If you want handouts for this section please refer to the materials provided in the resources section of the *Guide to Unit Elections*.]

In terms of rules it needs to be made clear to the unit leader from the beginning that (1) these are the rules that we will be following and (2) nobody present has the authority to circumvent these rules. Come prepared with the rules in hand in case there should be any question or dispute.

In terms of rules for you as the team: these are inflexible. They must be followed to the letter. These rules do not necessarily have to be memorized but you must be familiar enough with them to (1) know when to refer back to the written rules and (2) be able to run the election smoothly.

Let's review the rules right now.

[Using the information in the "Unit Elections Rules and Procedures" in the resources section of the *Guide to Unit Elections*, discuss each rule. Reading each rule word for word is not necessary, but they need to be covered in detail.]

THE PROCESS:

10 MINUTES

[If you want handouts for this section please refer to the materials provided in the "Unit Election Team Checklist" and the "Unit Elections Ceremony" in the resources section of the *Guide to Unit Elections*]

Unlike the rules this is one area where you have the ability to deviate, but it is not recommended. Following the process is just as important as the rules since the process will serve to set the tone. [Focus on the "At the Election" section.]

[Using the information in the "Unit Elections Rules and Procedures" in the resources section of the *Guide to Unit Elections*, run through each step. Reading each step word for word is not necessary, but they need to be covered in detail]

There is also a unit election ceremony script. It is important that the ceremony script be followed. Arrive early and plan who is doing each part. Remember, a Scout is prepared.

THE PERFORMANCE:

20 MINUTES

What we are going to do now is go through an entire unit election from meeting with the unit leader to finalizing the paperwork.

Scenario:	Situation:	Players:
Initial meeting between Scoutmaster and unit election team leader	This is the Scoutmaster's first unit election and he is not entirely sure about the protocol. As a result, it is important for the unit election team leader to explain the process to the Scoutmaster and provide the required information. The Scoutmaster should be asking a lot of questions and the unit election team leader needs to answer them (there is no shame in referring to the written rules or procedures as detailed in the <i>Guide to Unit Elections</i>).	Scoutmaster unit election team leader
Conducting the elections	The unit election team conducts the election as written in the unit elections ceremony script. Distribute ballots and collect them.	Unit election team Candidates Troop or team
Counting the ballots	Count the ballots twice to ensure accuracy.	Unit election team Scoutmaster
Unhappy Scoutmaster	The Scoutmaster is unhappy that one Scout was elected and wants his name removed.	Unit election team Scoutmaster
Announcing the results/finalizing paperwork	Announce the results and finalize the paperwork.	Unit election team Scoutmaster Candidates Troop or team

[It is very important at this point to complete a reflection on the role-playing exercise. Be mindful of your comments during the process because the questions or situations you point out will be situational. Below is a list of potential questions]

- So what went right with our election?
- What went wrong? What can we do to solve this problem?
- What should we continue doing in the future?
- What other ways could we have handled the Scoutmaster's problem?
- Could we have been more upfront about the rules at the beginning and would have had it prevented the problem?

CONCLUSION:

5 MINUTES

I hope you all learned a lot today about the process of unit elections. The best way to get better at this is to be prepared. Know the rules, know your role, and know how to handle situations. A unit election is a Scout's first contact with the Order of the Arrow and it is critical that we present the Order of the Arrow in a positive manner.

I will now field and questions or concerns.

APPENDIX: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q1: What is the best resource for learning more about managing and conduction unit elections?
- A1: The *Guide to Inductions* <www.oa-bsa.org/pages/content/guide-to-inductions> for OA members and the *Guide to Unit Elections* <www.oa-bsa.org/pages/content/guide-to-unit-elections> for both members and non-members.
- Q2: Where can I find the official unit elections procedures and eligibility requirements?
- A2: The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* <www.oa-bsa.org/pages/content/publications#goa>.

APPENDIX: SOURCE MATERIAL & RESOURCES

Order of the Arrow Guide to Inductions

www.oa-bsa.org/pages/content/guide-to-inductions

Order of the Arrow Guide to Unit Elections

www.oa-bsa.org/pages/content/guide-to-unit-elections

Order of the Arrow Guide for Officers and Advisers

www.oa-bsa.org/pages/content/publications#goa

UNIT ELECTION TEAM CHECKLIST

Before the Election

Before the election, the unit elections chairman, with any necessary help from the unit election team members, will need to:

- Get information about the unit.** Get the name and phone number of the unit leader and OA troop/team representative and adviser, the location where the unit meets, and the date and time of the election from the chapter or lodge unit elections chairman.
- Contact the unit leader.** Confirm the date, time, and location of the unit election. Advise unit leaders that they, not the lodge or chapter, have the prerogative to determine whether the names of those elected are to be announced to the unit after the election or whether the announcement is to be postponed until a later time. The unit leader should also be offered the opportunity to tell the unit the purposes of the Order of the Arrow as it relates to the troop or team.
- List the eligible candidates.** Review with the unit leader the eligibility requirements that were contained in the Letter Announcing Elections so that the unit leader can have a list of eligible members ready for the election.
- Remember recommendation of adults.** Advise the unit leader of the unit committee's option to recommend adults to become candidates in the Order of the Arrow. The unit leader should be provided the Adult Leader Nomination Form at the unit election along with information on the adult leader nomination process (found in the *Guide to Inductions* and in the *Guide to Unit Elections*) and the address to return the completed form to.
- Arrange for Video Equipment.** Arrange with the unit leader to have a TV or projector with laptop or DVD player available to show the unit elections video.
- Prepare ballots.** If your lodge uses preprinted ballots, send a sample ballot, in advance, to the unit leader so that the leader can enter the name of eligible Scouts and make a copy for each voter.
- Send information.** If the unit leader does not have a copy of the Letter Announcing Elections and the Adult Leader Nomination Form, send him or her a copy.
- Contact the OA troop/team representative.** Review the elections procedure with the OA troop/team representative and his adviser several weeks before the election. If an Arrowman from the unit is to take a speaking part, he needs to be provided a copy of the script in advance, so that he can be well-prepared. Ask the OA troop/team representative to announce the election at the unit's preceding meeting and contact all the members to ensure a good turnout for the election. The OA troop/team representative should remind all Arrowmen, both youth and adults, to be in full uniform with sash.
- Confirm that the election team is available.** The election team leader should check with team members to make sure that they can participate and have no conflicts. If needed, recruit or call alternates and make sure that they are prepared and have all needed resources. A majority of team members should be from outside the unit in which election is being held. Confirm a time and meeting place for departure.

- ❑ **Reconfirm with the unit.** Contact the unit leader and unit OA troop/team representative and his adviser three to four days before the meeting to reconfirm the election time, date, and location.
- ❑ **Reconfirm with the unit election team.** Contact the unit election team three to four days before the meeting to reconfirm the election time, date, and location. Remind the team members to wear their complete uniform with sash.
- ❑ **Get supplies ready.** Ensure that the unit election team has enough ballots, pens or pencils, the youth and adult forms, the elections video, the Unit Elections Ceremony (*Guide to Unit Elections* resources section) and handouts with information about the upcoming Ordeals.
- ❑ **Deal with scheduling conflicts.** If a conflict should develop that prevents the unit election team from conducting the unit election as scheduled, contact the unit leader as far ahead of time as possible so that the cancellation will have as little negative effect on the unit program as possible and so a new date for the election can be set.

At the Election

At the election, the unit election team will need to:

- ❑ **Be in proper uniform.** The unit election team needs to set a good example by being in complete, correct Scout uniform with OA sashes.
- ❑ **Bring supplies.** Bring a supply of pencils, paper, or preprinted ballots sufficient for the expected number of voters.
- ❑ **Bring forms and handouts.** Bring copies of the Letter Announcing Elections, Unit Elections Report Form, the Adult Leader Nomination Form, Unit Elections Evaluation Form, and handouts with information about the upcoming Ordeals and contact information for questions.
- ❑ **Bring the unit elections video.**
- ❑ **Bring the video equipment** unless it is being provided by the unit or is not being used in the unit election.
- ❑ **Bring elections ceremony scripts.**
- ❑ Arrive a few minutes before the meeting starts so that the team can set up and talk with the unit leader before the meeting.
- ❑ **Determine who is eligible.** Meet with the unit leader and confirm who is eligible to be elected. The unit leader should sign the Unit Elections Report Form at this time.
- ❑ **Get contact information of those eligible.** Record the names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, BSA ID numbers, and date of birth of all those eligible to be elected before the meeting. The team might otherwise give away the results of the election by after the election asking only for the names and addresses of those elected.
- ❑ **Determine active membership.** To hold an election, the unit must have at least half of the unit's active membership present. No absentee votes are permitted. It is up to the unit leader to determine which Scouts are active members. If at least half the active members are not present, the election must be rescheduled.

- ❑ **Assign duties.** Talk with the unit OA troop/team representative, his adviser, and any other OA members in the unit who want to help with the election. Give out assignments to these brothers.
- ❑ **Consider adult recommendations.** If the unit committee wishes to recommend one or more adults for membership in the Order of the Arrow, ask the unit committee to complete and sign the Adult Leader Nomination Form. Advise the unit committee of when and how they will be notified of the lodge adult selection committee's action. In the event that no youth are elected from the unit, no adult recommendation may be accepted from the unit that year.
- ❑ **Determine if results are to be announced.** Confirm with the unit leader whether he or she wants the election results announced at the meeting.
- ❑ **Conduct the election.** Use the unit elections video and the approved ceremony script to conduct the election. The votes are taken by written secret ballot.
- ❑ **Count the ballots.** After voting is completed, the election team and the unit leader carefully count the ballots at least twice.
- ❑ **Remember, there is no quota!** A Scout is elected if he receives the votes of at least half the voters turning in ballots, rounding the required number of votes up if the number of voters is odd.
- ❑ **If no one is elected,** inform the unit, answer any additional questions, and conduct one more vote. If no one is elected on the second vote, the result is final. That unit will not elect any youth or adult candidates that year.
- ❑ **Complete the Unit Elections Report.** Immediately after the unit election, the Unit Elections Report Form is completed and signed by the unit leader and the election team members.
- ❑ **Announce the results.** If the unit leader chooses to have the results announced immediately after the election, the unit elections ceremony includes a paragraph for this purpose. It also contains a paragraph to charge the new candidates after they are taken to a separate room, and a paragraph to challenge all OA members in that unit.
- ❑ **Hold the call-out ceremony.** If a unit desires to have a call-out ceremony immediately after the election, the unit election team should be prepared to present a ceremony that includes all the key elements.
- ❑ **Distribute the Ordeal handout.** If the results have been announced at the meeting, inform the new candidates of the details of the Ordeals that they may attend. Provide each candidate with a written handout with information about the Ordeals. If the results were not announced, inform the unit leader and OA troop/team representative of the date, time, and place when the next call-out ceremony will be held and alternate call-outs. Also, provide the unit leader and the OA troop/team representative the handout containing the information about the upcoming Ordeals.
- ❑ **Identify potential election team members and elangomats.** Find out if any of the Arrowmen in the unit might be interested in helping with unit elections in other units in the area, in serving as elangomats, or in any other lodge activities. Record the names and contact information of those who are interested.
- ❑ **Complete the evaluation.** Give the OA troop/team representative and his adviser the Unit Elections Evaluation Form and a self-addressed, stamped envelope or website address where the evaluation can be submitted. Have them, with input from their unit

leader, fill out the form in private and return it directly to the unit elections committee chairman.

- Thank** the unit leader, the OA troop/team representative and his adviser, and any Arrowmen who assisted in the election. Make them feel proud of the work they did.

After the Election

After the election, the unit elections chairman, with any necessary help from the team members, will need to:

- Report on the election.** Provide feedback and an evaluation of the election to the unit elections committee. Discuss any problems that may have occurred, and report if the unit needs a special call-out ceremony performed.
- Turn in forms.** Turn in the Unit Elections Report Form to the unit elections committee.
- Turn in adult recommendations.** Turn in adult recommendations to the lodge adult selection committee.
- Recruit unit elections volunteers.** Inform the unit elections committee of any OA members who have volunteered to help conduct other unit elections.
- Recruit elangomats.** Inform other committee chairmen of any OA members who wish to be contacted about serving as elangomats or on other lodge committees.
- Reschedule a missed election.** If the election had to be rescheduled, postponed or could not be held because 50 percent of the active members of the unit were not present, inform the unit elections committee immediately so that the election can be rescheduled as soon as possible.

UNIT ELECTIONS 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.)

UNIT ELECTION EVALUATION FORM

Unit Type & No.: _____ District: _____

Location: _____ Date of Unit Election: _____

Unit Leader: _____ Phone No. _____

Order of the Arrow Troop/Team Representative: _____

Order of the Arrow Troop/Team Adviser: _____

Yes No Item

____ Did the unit election team arrive on time?

____ Was the unit election team in proper uniform?

____ Was the team courteous to leaders and Scouts?

____ Was the team knowledgeable of election procedures?

____ Did the team have the correct forms?

____ Was the unit leader advised of the election procedures?

____ Was the unit leader advised in advance of the choices available for call-outs?

____ Was the election conducted in accordance with Order of the Arrow and Boy Scouts of America rules, policies, and procedures?

____ Were any other presentations, such as camp promotion, well-presented?

____ Did the election offer a clear statement of criteria on which Scouts should base their vote?

____ If the unit leader decided to have the newly elected candidates called out, was the call-out impressive?

____ Did the unit's Order of the Arrow troop/team representative help conduct the unit election?

What was your overall impression of the unit election? _____

How could it have been improved? _____

What can the Order of the Arrow do to better serve your unit? _____

Signed (Unit Leader)

Signed (Order of the Arrow Troop/Team Representative)

Signed (Order of the Arrow Troop/Team Adviser)

Return this form to the Order of the Arrow unit elections chairman: [Name]

Address: [Address, City, State, ZIP]

Email: [Address]



Adult Candidate Nomination Form

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 registered unit adults (age 21 or over) 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 12 months. Recommendations of the lodge adult selection committee, with the approval of the Scout executive, serving as Supreme Chief of the Fire, will be candidates for induction, provided all conditions are fulfilled. Consult the *Guide for Officers and Advisers* for procedures for district and council Scouters.

Please print clearly and complete all of the information requested

District: _____ Unit Number: _____ Position: _____
First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____ Last Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Birth Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Years as Adult: ____ Home Phone: (____) _____
Email Address(es): _____
Training Completed: _____
Positions Held: _____
Scout as Youth / Rank: _____
Community Activities: _____
Employment / Trade: _____
Camping Requirement: _____

The camping requirement for youth candidates must be fulfilled by adults for them to be considered. To be eligible, the adult must have completed 15 nights of Boy Scout camping during the two years immediately prior to nomination. The 15 nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of five consecutive nights of overnight camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the BSA. Only five nights of the long-term camp may be credited toward the 15-night camping requirement; the balance must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps of, at most, three nights each. Include above the dates and location of the long-term camping experience.

Please also make a brief statement regarding the individual for each item on the back of this page.

Nomination for Unit Scouters: The adult leader, who fulfills the above requirements, is nominated for membership consideration in the Order of the Arrow. Date: ____/____/____	
Unit Leader: _____ Print Name	_____ Signature
Committee Chairman: _____ Print Name	_____ Signature
Nomination for District/Council Scouters: The adult leader, who fulfills the above requirements, is nominated for membership consideration in the Order of the Arrow. Date: ____/____/____	
Nominator: _____ Print Name & Position	_____ Signature



Adult Candidate Nomination Form

1. Selection of the adult 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's abilities include:

2. As Scouting's National Honor Society, the Order of the Arrow's purpose is to:
- Recognize those who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and through that recognition cause others to conduct themselves in a way that warrants similar recognition.
 - Promote camping, responsible outdoor adventure, and environmental stewardship as essential components of every Scout's experience, in the unit, year-round, and in summer camp.
 - Develop leaders with the willingness, character, spirit, and ability to advance the activities of their units, our Brotherhood, Scouting, and ultimately our nation.
 - Crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.

This adult will be an asset to the Order of the Arrow due to demonstrated skills and abilities, which fulfill the purpose of the Order of the Arrow, in the following manner:

3. This adult leader's membership will provide a positive role model for the growth and development of the youth members of the lodge because:

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS OF CANDIDATES

To the parents of _____ Date _____

Congratulations! Your son has been elected as a candidate for the Order of the Arrow, the National Honor Society of the Boy Scouts of America. Organized in 1915 to recognize honor campers, the purpose of the Order of the Arrow is to recognize those who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and through that recognition cause others to conduct themselves in a way that warrants similar recognition; to promote camping, to develop leaders, and to crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.

Candidates for the Order of the Arrow are chosen not only for what they have done, but also for what they are expected to do in serving the welfare of others. Because your son was selected for candidacy by the unique method of being elected by his peers, we are sure that he is well worthy of this honor.

On _____ at _____, your son will become a member of our Order of the Arrow lodge, _____, during our induction weekend. This weekend will offer a unique opportunity for him to reflect on his personal commitment to the principles and purposes of the Order of the Arrow. The weekend is undertaken by every new candidate and is a meaningful and inspiring experience that will not soon be forgotten.

Induction in the Order of the Arrow will open many new doors for your son. Our lodge participates in many events every year. *(Optional: Insert the date and description of an upcoming event here, for example, NOAC, conclave, etc.)* In addition, the Order of the Arrow provides some of the most valuable youth leadership training and opportunities available. These opportunities will build upon the knowledge he already has received during his Scouting experience. This is truly an exciting time for you and your son. Your encouragement will be appreciated.

Please feel free to contact me at _____ if you have any questions concerning the Order of the Arrow. Thank you for your support of your son and of Scouting.

Yours in Scouting,

Lodge Adviser and/or Chapter Adviser

Lodge Name