

Order of the Arrow Eligibility Requirements and Election Procedures

About the Order of the Arrow

The Order of the Arrow (OA) is Scouting's National Honor Society. The fourfold purpose of the OA is:

1. To recognize those campers – Scouts and Scouters – who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives, and by such recognition cause other campers to conduct themselves in such manner as to warrant recognition.
2. To develop and maintain camping traditions and spirit.
3. To promote Scout camping, which reaches its greatest effectiveness as a part of the unit's camping program, both year-round and in the summer camp, as directed by the camping committee of the council.
4. To crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.

Order of the Arrow Elections



Once each year (calendar year), a chartered Boy Scout Troop or Varsity Team may hold a unit election to elect youth members of their troop or team to become members of the Order of the Arrow. (Both youth and adult Scouts and Scouters can become members of the OA, but only youth members are elected. Assistant Scoutmasters under the age of 21 are considered youth members for OA purposes). New members are voted on by every youth member of the troop present at the election - not just the OA members (thereby insuring that Scouts are elected mostly by people who are not OA members). If your troop has no active OA members, that's fine. A unit election team, trained in the latest OA election policies, will visit a regular troop meeting at the Scoutmaster's invitation to conduct the election for you.

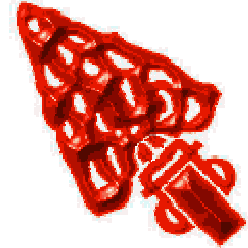
Elections are usually held in the spring by an OA Elections Team from the Lodge. Pocumtuc Lodge recommends that elections take place no later than May 15th so that the newly elected candidate has ample time to plan on attending one of the Ordeal weekends. Elections are normally held at a regular troop meeting, and take about half an hour to complete.

In order for an election to be held, at least 50% of your active youth members must be present – if less than 50% are present, the election must be rescheduled. All elections must be conducted by an active member of Pocumtuc Lodge who is knowledgeable of and qualified to conduct an OA election. Units are urged to schedule an official OA election team of the Pocumtuc Lodge to conduct the election.

Youth Requirements

The requirements for election for youth members (in the OA, a 'youth' is anyone under the age of 21*) are as follows:

1. Must be under 21 years old at the time of election. (Assistant Scoutmasters under 21 are considered Youth)
2. Hold at least the First Class Scout rank (this includes Assistant Scoutmasters over the age of 18 but under the age of 21; they have to have earned First Class before their 18th birthday).
3. In the past two years, have completed fifteen (15) days and nights of camping under the auspices of the Boy Scouts of America. The fifteen days and nights of camping must include one long-term camp of six days and five nights (usually this is summer camp), and the balance of the camping must be short-term (1, 2, or 3 night) camps.
4. Have the approval of the scoutmaster.
5. The above requirements must be certified by the Scoutmaster, BEFORE the election is conducted. Use the Youth Election Form



* A Scout with a disability who is classified as a youth member of the unit (regardless of age) may vote and be a candidate for election as long as all other qualifications are met.

How the election is conducted for youth

Prior To The Election

The Scoutmaster prepares a list of eligible candidates for election based on the requirements above. Prior to the election, the Scoutmaster should notify and counsel those Scouts who he is not recommending for election. If possible, the Scoutmaster or Senior Patrol Leader should prepare pre-printed ballots with all the names of the eligible candidates.

On Election Night - The election team conducts the unit OA election

The election team arrives before the election is held. They will ask for the number of Scouts registered in the troop; the number of Scouts present at the meeting; and the names and ranks of all Scouts who are deemed eligible by the Scoutmaster. This information is put on the election form and the Scoutmaster certifies this information with his signature on the form.

The names of the candidates are presented to the unit, and the election team explains the criteria for voting.

1. Voting for candidates is done by secret ballot.
2. No interference or public revelation of an individual's votes or the votes in total is tolerated.
3. All youth, including Assistant Scoutmasters under the age of 21, may vote.
4. Candidates may vote for themselves if they think that they are worthy.

3. Those voting have three options:

1. Not turn in a ballot, which is abstaining. This does not affect the final result.
2. Turn in a blank ballot, which is a vote for nobody. This helps no one and hurts all candidates.
3. Vote for any number, including all of the candidates eligible. This helps those who they vote for, and hurts those who they don't vote for.

Ballots are collected by the team and counted in private. In order to be elected, a candidate has to receive 50% of the ballots TURNED IN (abstentions don't count against the final, but blank ballots do). The election team notes which scouts have been elected, and destroys the ballots (preferably offsite). If no one Scout has enough votes to be elected, the election team re-runs the election, with further explanations of the OA and offering to answer questions. If the result of the second ballot is that again no one is elected, that counts as the election for this year.

The Scoutmaster is told the results of the election. It is his choice as to when the results are made known; immediately or at another time in the troop setting. Note, however, that a candidate has one (1) year in which he may complete the Ordeal, which completes his membership into the OA.

The Election Team completes the election form:

1. A check mark by all candidates who are elected.
2. Fill out the back of the form with the names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses of those elected.
3. Election team members sign the form.
4. Mail or return the form to the Council Service Center.

Completing the Ordeal, a weekend-long experience that tests a Scout's dedication to the Scout Oath and Law, is the final step for membership in the Order of the Arrow. Pocumtuc Lodge has at least two Ordeals a year, one in the spring and one in the fall, so the candidate generally has two opportunities to complete the Ordeal. Please do not hold off on notifying a candidate unnecessarily so that he misses a chance to be inducted. Exceptions to the one-year rule may be granted by the Lodge for extenuating circumstances. If a Scout does not complete the Ordeal within one year and an exception is not granted, the Scout would need to be re-elected.

How to schedule a Unit Election

1. The Patrol Leader's Council and Scoutmaster pick a date for the OA election (Please have alternate dates available). Dates should be picked far enough in advance to allow the election team to schedule the election. Elections are best held during a regular troop meeting, at a time where as close to 100% of the troop as possible can attend.
2. The SM or SPL submits an [election request](#) to Lodge. The SM or SPL should give simple driving directions (be sure and include a street address), meeting time and location.
3. The Scoutmaster prepares a list of eligible candidates for election based on the requirements above. Prior to the election, the Scoutmaster should notify and counsel those Scouts who he is not recommending for election. If possible, the Scoutmaster

or Senior Patrol Leader should prepare preprinted ballots with all the names of the eligible candidates. If not, the election team will have blank ballots with them.

4. The Election Team will contact the Scoutmaster to verify the election, location, time, etc. Any questions or concerns should be resolved at this point.



Adult Requirements and Nomination

The Order of the Arrow is a youth organization--adults are considered to be honorary members of the lodge and as such they must be nominated to and approved by the lodge (adults that were elected to the OA as a youth do not have to be nominated). As long as the unit successfully elects at least one youth member to the Order, the troop then may also nominate (not elect) an adult for membership. Where youth membership is given by his peers as a recognition for service, adults are nominated and accepted if their membership will enrich the Order of the Arrow experience for the youth, or provide some service to the Lodge, the Camp, or the Council. Adult membership should not be given solely as a recognition or honor. There is no provision for nominations by Venturing Crews or Explorer Posts.

The requirements for nomination of adult members (in the OA, an 'adult' is anyone 21 years of age or older) are as follows:

1. Must be a registered and active member of the Western Massachusetts Council of the Boy Scouts of America at the time of nomination.
2. Must be at least 21 years old at the time of nomination. Both males and females are eligible.
3. In the past two years, have completed fifteen (15) days and nights of camping under the auspices of the Boy Scouts of America. The fifteen days and nights of camping must include one long-term camp of six days and five nights, and the balance of the camping must be short-term (1, 2, or 3 night) camps.

A separate [Adult Nomination Form](#) exists for adult Scouters. At the end of a successful election for youth, the Election Team will give the Troop Committee Chairman an adult nomination form. The nomination form is completed in full and mailed to the Lodge, care of the Council Service Center. The Adult Selection Committee will review the form and make a decision on the adult's nomination. Please remember that nomination does not ensure approval. If approved, the troop will be notified so that they can decide how they will inform the candidate. Adult candidates need to complete the Ordeal within one year, same as a youth member.

To Schedule a Unit Election...

Unit elections are normally held from January 1 through May 15, but may also be held at other times, preferably not during Summer Camp. To schedule a unit election, please use the [Request An Election](#) feature on this website.

Any questions about elections, procedures, results, the Ordeal, or any other concern about the Order of the Arrow can be directed to the Lodge Adviser.

