

Has your unit scheduled an Order of the Arrow election?

A successful unit election is the first step to attaining membership in the Order of the Arrow. If your unit has had an election every year or if this is your first exposure to the "OA," this page will help you understand what will happen, when it will happen and what you need to do to have your unit best prepared. If at any time you have a question, contact the lodge for clarification and we will respond as quickly as possible.

Many "tall tales" about Order of the Arrow exist. Two of the most common concerns are addressed here:

1. The statement that the Order of the Arrow is a "secret society" is incorrect. Nothing could be further from the truth. The OA is a program within the Scouting program. ALL the rules that apply to your unit apply to the OA. Hazing in any form is not allowed. We encourage an air of mystery to the youth because it builds anticipation. However, the content of our ceremonies and the details of our induction sequence may be discussed with any truly interested adult leader or parent. If this is an area of concern, please contact the Lodge Adviser or Lodge Staff Adviser to arrange a time to discuss and answer your questions. There are NO religious implications.
2. The belief that Order of the Arrow is a Naish program is incorrect. While it is true that many of the activities held by the OA are held at Naish Scout Reservation, the OA has held programs at Bartle and non-Scouting facilities throughout the Kansas City area for almost 75 years; OA is a council program. OA is the National Honor Society of Boy Scouting and exists to strengthen a young man's commitment to Scouting and his troop, not to take a young man away from his unit. Camping at Naish for summer camp is not a requirement of becoming a member of OA. Young men who become leaders of Tamegonit Lodge are expected to maintain their commitment to their troop; OA leadership is an added commitment the young man makes to enhance his knowledge and ability to help his troop.

Eligibility

Scouts are elected to the Order by their fellow unit members, following approval by the Scoutmaster or Varsity Team Coach. To become a member, a youth must be a registered member of a Boy Scout troop or Varsity Scout team and hold First Class rank. The youth must have experienced fifteen days and nights of Boy Scout camping during the two-year period prior to the election. The fifteen days and nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of six consecutive days and five nights of resident camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America. The balance of the camping must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps.






Adult selection is based on their ability to perform the necessary functions to help the Order fulfill its purpose, and is not for recognition. Selected adult Scouters must be an asset to the Order because of demonstrated abilities, and provide a positive role model for the youth members of the lodge. Adults are nominated for selection to OA by the Troop Committee on a basis of one adult per three elected boys in the troop/team or part thereof. Additionally, currently serving unit leaders (Scoutmaster or Coach) that are not already members of the OA may be nominated in addition to the one adult per three youth ratio as long as he or she has served as unit leader for least the previous twelve months.

Question: Why should my unit have a unit election?

There are several reasons each troop in the Heart of America Council should plan for and hold an annual OA election. It is an excellent opportunity for the youth of your troop to recognize those they view as leaders and outstanding Scouts. This recognition can encourage your members as they progress in Scouting. When an older Scout becomes more involved in Scouting, his bonds will grow. Because all OA members must be active members of their unit, your unit can benefit by retaining older members as leaders and examples to younger Scouts. Finally, the OA has many opportunities beyond what most units can offer to gain leadership skills that benefit them personally and ultimately, your troop.


Question: Can a troop do its own unit election?

Under some specific guidelines a unit may be allowed to conduct its unit OA election. It is best to have a Chapter Election Team do the election but if circumstances require and your unit complies with the following rules you may be authorized to conduct the election. **If your unit conducts its own election without complying with any of the following requirements, the election will be deemed invalid and the results will not be accepted by Tamegonit Lodge. Any troop holding a first election will not be allowed to conduct its own unit OA election.**

-  You must have an OA Troop Representative in your unit and that OA Representative must be registered with the lodge.
-  At least the Troop Representative or one other Scout must have completed a Tamegonit Lodge Unit Election training session.
-  An adult leader will assist with the election. A minimum of two OA members from your unit will conduct the election.
-  Your unit has the proper OA Election Forms, OA Election Ballots and the OA Election Video. These are available from your Chapter officers.
-  Receive approval from the Tamegonit Lodge or local chapter prior to conducting the election. Units may also conduct a "joint" election with a neighboring unit at the same time and location. This has an advantage to the unit and to the lodge Election Team. Only the paperwork must be completed separately.

Question: When can we have an election?

Ideally, anytime from January 1st to March 31st. The date can be a regular troop meeting or a special meeting. Our goal is to have all unit elections completed by April 1 to ensure each unit has the opportunity to meet the two-week registration deadline of each Induction Weekend available. However, if that is not possible, it should be held as best suits your troop.

 **Contact Tamegonit Lodge if you have any other questions concerning OA membership or OA unit elections at 816.942.9333 or scott.weaver@scouting.org or visit us online at <http://www.hoac-bsa.org/Camping/HonorCampingPrograms/OrderOfTheArrow.aspx> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Tamegonit-Lodge-Order-of-the-Arrow/149979421736092>.**

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