OA ELECTIONS: JUST THE FACTS

Time Available 10 minutes

Learning Objectives
At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:
- Explain the requirements for being elected to the Order of the Arrow
- Explain the ins and outs of an OA election Suggested Presenter(s)
- District lodge chief or other member of the Order of the Arrow

Presentation Method
Discussion with slides, if possible

BSA Reference Materials
- Guide to Unit Elections,
  www.oa-bsa.org/uploads/publications/GuideToUnitElections2015.pdf

Presentation Content
Each year lodges visit individual troops and hold unit elections, the process through which Scouts elect their peers to membership in the Order of the Arrow.

To be eligible for election to the OA, a Scout must:
- Be a registered member of the Boy Scouts of America
- Have attained at least the rank of First Class
- Have the approval of his Scoutmaster
- 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.
  This requirement applies to all candidates for youth and adult membership in the Order of the Arrow, but is subject to waiver for district/council Scouters as set forth in the National Order of the Arrow Committee's Guide for Officers and Advisers.

Are the requirements the same for adults?
- Adults must follow most of the same requirements for eligibility as the youth. However, they must be at least 21 years of age, exempt from the First Class requirement, and approved by an adult selection committee after an eligibility form has been turned in by the troop committee chairman.

What percentage of the troop must be present in order to carry out the election?
- It is required that at least 50 percent of the registered active unit membership is present at the unit election. A registered active member is a youth who carries a current national membership card and participates in unit activities. A youth who moves away or drops out of the unit is not an active member and would not be counted in the registered active membership figure.

Can eligible Scouts turn in a ballot?
- Eligible Scouts can vote for those they feel are worthy to become members of the Order of the Arrow, including themselves.

How is the voting carried out?
- Voting is anonymous by secret ballot. Open voting or campaigning of any kind is not permitted.

How many eligible Scouts can a Scout vote for?

- A Scout may put as many or as few names as he wishes on his ballot. If he feels nobody is ready, he is free to turn in a blank ballot.

What if a Scout doesn't know any of the eligible Scouts?

- Abstaining from voting is allowed for any new members of the troop who feel they don't know the eligible Scouts well enough. For a Scout to abstain, they should not turn in a ballot at all, which will not affect the final result of the election. However, do not confuse an abstention with a no-vote! A blank ballot turned in counts against those who are eligible.

How many votes must an eligible Scout receive in order to become a candidate?

- Eligible Scouts must receive at least half of the votes cast to be elected. If there are an odd number of ballots cast, round up. If none of those eligible are elected, the election team will give the unit another chance to vote. This second vote will be final even if no one is elected.

If an eligible Scout receives at least 50 percent of the votes, is he a member of the Order of the Arrow?

- Being elected is only the first step in the induction process. Those elected have first to go through their Ordeal before becoming members of the Order of the Arrow.