

What is Order of the Arrow (OA)

Troop 518 Training

Order of the Arrow (OA) is the name of the national honor society within Scouting. Membership is open to both Scouts and Adult (male and female) leaders. Requirements are similar for both age groups:

- Be at least First Class rank (Scouts only)
- Have at least 15 nights of camping with the Troop
- Attend at least one full week of BSA Summer Camp
- Be a member in good standing with their Troop and BSA
- Be elected by a majority of their peers

Members (called "Arrowmen") are elected using secret ballot by members of their troop. All members of the troop vote, whether they are OA members or not. As many Scouts as qualify can be elected. Usually only one adult leader is elected. The OA election is held only once per year, usually in the very early Spring.

The results of the election are secret to everyone except the Scoutmaster. Those Scouts and Scouters who are elected find out by attending a special ceremony called a "Tap Out". Those persons who are tapped must attend a special OA camping weekend that is only held 3 times a year. If the election is not "sealed" by attendance at one of these campouts, then the nomination expires and the Scout or Scouter must wait for the next election cycle and be re-nominated and re-elected.

Once the special campout is completed, the person is accepted as an "Ordeal" level member. Full membership is earned when the person returns in 12 months to seal his membership at the "Brotherhood" level. This second step is a personal choice, and is wholly dependent upon the member's readiness. A third level is offered to the very best of the very best, when Brotherhood members elect fellow members to "Vigil" level.

It is a great honor to be a member of the Order of the Arrow. Only the best of the best Scouts and Scouters are elected. So it is a very elite group. OA members are recognized by the presence of a red arrow emblem on their uniform and a pocket cover patch on their right front pocket.

All OA functions are open only to OA members. The OA ceremonies, hailing signs and meeting details are secret. Once a person is an OA member, they are OA for life. Should a Scout return twenty years later as a Scouter, they are allowed pick up with OA right where they left off as a Scout. If you are such an adult, see the application forms on the Mowogo or T518 webpages.