



# OPERATIONS UPDATE

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## DISTRIBUTION:

- Scout Executive
- Section Chief
- National Committee
- Section Adviser
- Area Director
- Lodge Adviser

New editions of the *Order of the Arrow Handbook, Guide for Officers and Advisers (GOA)*, and *Field Operations Guide (FOG)* are available. The new *Handbook* will be issued at NOAC, and following that, can be purchased through the National Supply Division. The new *GOA* and *FOG* are presently available for download and printing at the Order's official Web site: <http://www.oa-bsa.org>. Besides correcting several passages, updating the tables of contents and the index in the publications, and adding the new chiefs and programs of emphasis, there are several important changes in these new editions.

The Order's membership requirements have been added to the *Handbook* along with a rewrite of the section "Why ceremonies?" on page 30. The new text emphasizes that non-OA members should not attend the ceremonies. The lodge adviser is given a procedure to follow for non-members to learn about the ceremonies and for parents to ultimately decide whether they want their son to participate. Guidance is given to include "BSA" or the Boy Scout emblem in all patch designs. A statement is included that chapter or clan flaps are not permitted, and the National Quality Lodge Program has been added to the *Handbook*. A description of the OA Ocean Adventure program has replaced the National Leadership Summit text.

In both the *GOA* and the *Handbook* the list of national conferences and treks has been replaced with a list of the national programs of emphasis. The evolution of the region chief position has been embellished. The references to the Goodman Scholarships have been deleted and the Josh Sain Scholarships have been expanded to include section chiefs. The fact that the *GOA* is now downloadable has been added.

The *GOA* has improved text on council and district adult recommendations. Revised text has been provided to reflect that out-of-council elections are not permitted, out-of-council call-outs are not permitted except under very specific circumstances, and 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. The standard naming convention for lodges is defined and a corrected chart is provided showing the Order's place in Scouting. The following clarification has been added to the Vigil procedure on page 31: "None of the Vigil selection and induction procedures may be delegated to chapters, other than to recommend candidates to the lodge nominating committee." The word "lodge" has been added in a number of locations on the same page to reinforce that the Vigil Honor is conducted and administered at the lodge level.

The language in all three publications has been improved to state that section advisers (principal, staff and associate) are annually appointed by the area director, with the concurrence of the region Order of the Arrow chairman and region staff adviser. The region director establishes the area boundaries and appoints the area director. The area director groups the councils into one or more sections and assigns the section identifiers, based on recommendations made by the region Order of the Arrow chairman and region staff adviser. The current structure of the national Order of the Arrow committee has been updated in all three publications.

The *FOG* has a revised training outline for “Where To Go Camping” and two new appendices: Summary of Insurance Plans and National Chief and Vice Chief Election Procedure. In addition there are several other important changes. The process of appointing a replacement national vice chief has been defined. Newly elected section chiefs must resign all lodge and chapter offices within 30 days of their election. Section advisers report to the area director and the region Order of the Arrow chairman. At the conclave business meeting each council may cast one vote per youth member present at the time of the election, up to a maximum of 10 votes, for each office on all ballots; telephone, Email or other electronic votes are not permitted. Section chief appointees to special positions do not require letters of approval prior to being appointed and approved by the council of chiefs. The region staff adviser will provide all information on the insurance plans. Revised text is provided on council and lodge mergers: the lodge leadership has a critical obligation to accomplish a smooth and quick transition of the existing lodges into a single, merged lodge in the new council, lodge mergers must be accomplished within six months of the effective date of the council merger, to not merge the lodges is not an option, and delays in completing the lodge merger will be detrimental to the success of both the new council and the new lodge. Updated guidance on region realignments is also provided.