

**The Selective Service System  
Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs  
National Headquarters  
Arlington, Virginia 22209-2425**



### **SELECTIVE SERVICE LOTTERY**

If a military draft were necessary, a national lottery would establish the priority of call based on the birth dates of registrants. The first men drafted would be those turning age 20 during the calendar year of the lottery. If a young man turns 21 in the year of the draft, he would be in the second priority, in turning 22 he would be in the third priority, and so forth until the year in which he turns 26 at which time he is over the age of liability. Younger men would not be called in that year until after men in the 20-25 age groups are called.

Because of the enormous impact of this lottery, it would be conducted publicly, with full coverage by the media. Accredited observers from public interest groups will have full access to observe the proceedings.

**HERE IS HOW THE LOTTERY WOULD WORK:** The lottery process begins with two large air mix drums, the first containing balls having date and month painted on them, and the second drum with 1 through 365 (366 for men born in a leap year). Official observers certify that all the balls were loaded properly according to a published procedure.

One ball is drawn from the drum containing birth dates January 1 through December 31, followed by one drawn from the drum containing the sequence numbers from 1 through 365 (366 if a leap year). Consequently, the date and number are paired to establish the sequence number for each birth date. This will be accomplished in full view of all observers, officials, and the media.

For example, if the date of August 4 is drawn first from the "date" drum, and the sequence number of 32 is drawn from the "numbers" drum at the same time, then those men turning 20 on August 4 would be ordered for induction processing only after men whose birthdays drew sequence numbers 1 through 31. The drawings continue until all 365 (or 366) birthdays of the year are paired with a sequence number.

After the lottery is completed and results certified, the sequence of call is transmitted to the Selective Service System's Data Management Center. Almost immediately the first induction notices are prepared and sent via the U.S. Postal Service to men whose birth dates drew the lowest lottery numbers.

This system, based on random selection of birth dates, with the order of priority for reporting assigned in a random manner, is a fair and equitable method of calling men to serve.

**FAX 703-605-4106**

**E-mail: [information@sss.gov](mailto:information@sss.gov)**

**Web: <http://www.sss.gov>**

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