

Beekeeping Code of Practice for NSW

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Aims

To allow the keeping of bees in a manner compatible with the area in which they are located and to encourage the keeping of bees in such a way as to be acceptable to the general public.

Objective

- To ensure public safety and social amenity.
- To encourage good beekeeping practice.
- To maintain public and neighbourhood relations.

Number of permanent hives

Definition. A hive is a colony of bees headed by a queen bee.

Small block	2 hives
Average block (up to 1000 m ²)	4 hives
Roomy up to 2000 m ²	8 hives
Rural	No limit

Note

The number of hives is a guide only and circumstances may allow more or less hives to be kept. In some circumstances, the keeping of bees may be inappropriate in some locations, as determined by an appropriate regulatory authority. Contact your local council to see if they have any specific requirements for keeping bee hives.

Achieving the aims and objectives

- Beekeepers must obtain permission from the owners of private lands or from the authority of government controlled lands before placing bee hives on such lands.

This code of practice was developed by the Beekeeping Industry Consultative Committee, reviewed by the Inquiry into Beekeeping in Urban Areas August 2000 and refereed by Bruce White, NSW Department of Primary Industries Apiary Officer, Mick Rankmore, NSW DPI Regulatory Specialist Beekeeping, and Rob Bowman, NSW DPI Senior Inspector.

- Flight paths should be above 2 m when crossing property boundaries. This may be achieved by using screens, shrubs, walls, hedges, fences, etc., so setting specific distances between hives and buildings is unnecessary.
- Site hives in a warm sunny location to enhance the health of bees.
- Keep only docile strains of bees.
- Provide water for the bees.
- Consider others when manipulating hives and plan work to cause the least impact.
- Use escape boards to remove honey rather than shaking, brushing or blowing methods.
- Control swarming – options include:
 - re-queening
 - population control
 - splitting into smaller hives (temporarily).
- Keep the apiary neat and tidy.
- Take care when mowing around hives. Try to mow when hives are not active, but if the hives are active, use a smoker.
- Talk to your neighbours about beekeeping – discuss any problems they may have with it.
- Bee hives should not be positioned in the front yard of suburban houses. Where possible,

bee hives should be positioned out of sight of the public.

- Hives should not be located within the vicinity of schools, child care centres, hospitals or other public facilities.

Beekeepers must be registered with NSW Department of Primary Industries and must comply with the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Beekeepers are encouraged to increase and update their knowledge by attending field days and study courses and/or belonging to a beekeeping association.

Further reading

For further information, see the following Primefacts.

Backyard Beekeeping

Nuisance bees

Bee swarms and their control

Removing honey from the hive

Spring management

Buying queen bees

Beekeepers registration form

These Primefacts are available on the NSW DPI website www.dpi.nsw.gov.au or contact your nearest NSW DPI office for assistance.

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