

# LOSS CONTROL BULLETIN

## *Beekeeping Safety & Liability*

**Fact:** *Honeybees are responsible for pollinating most fruits and vegetables, as well as 90 commercial crop types worldwide.<sup>1</sup>*

Honeybees are a very important part of the agriculture industry and the environment in general; however, they can also pose a threat to people around them. Whether you are a commercial beekeeper or merely do it for a hobby, you need to be educated so that you can protect yourself and those around you from injury. In addition, you also need to be aware of proper practices to avoid any negligence, liability, or nuisance issues.

### **Physical Protection**

The most dangerous part of beekeeping is direct contact with the bees themselves. Thus there are certain pieces of clothing that you should wear to help protect yourself from your bees; this is especially true if you are a new to the practice.

When working with your bees you should wear a full bee suit, including a white jump suit, veil, and gloves. Some experienced beekeepers choose not to wear the suit. If you choose not to wear the jump suit, you should always wear the veil and gloves and dress in light colored clothing. Avoid wearing black or other dark clothing as bees will feel threatened by dark colors. Do not wear woolen fabrics because the bees could get caught in the fabric which can make them angry and more likely to sting. Lastly, when you are working around your bees you will want to make sure that you do not wear any strong perfume, aftershave, or other scents as these tend to make the bee more aggressive.

### **Working with Bees**

There is a right time and a wrong time to work with your hives. The optimal time to work with your hives is during the middle of the day when most of the bees are out searching for pollen. Avoid working with your hives during the late evening as the bees will have returned to the hive. It is also important to avoid opening a bee hive when it is cold or raining, especially if it has been raining for several days. The bees will become frustrated and ill tempered when they have been confined to the hive due to bad weather. Working with your bees at the correct time will help minimize disturbance making less stress on the bees and yourself.

When working with the hive it is important to take your time. Use smooth, calm motions as sudden movement or jolts will cause the bees to become irritated. Naturally if you are working in your bee hive there are going to be bees buzzing around you, it is essential that you stay calm. You should never flail your arms as it will only aggravate them, instead let the bees land on you and then brush them off gently.

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Lastly, when working with your bees it is essential to let them win....always. If you are working in your hive and the bees become angry or aggressive, simply stop your work, close the hive quickly, walk away, and come back another time. It is not safe to continue working with angry bees.

## Legal Protection

Now that you understand how to keep yourself safe physically, you need to know how to legally protect yourself. As a bee hive owner you have certain responsibilities to protect those around you. There are many people that are deathly allergic to bee stings, and you need to take every precaution to protect them. Below you will find some simple suggestions to help you avoid possible liability, negligence, and nuisance issues.

- Carefully choose where to place your bee hive. Make sure it is a safe distance away from other people.
- It is not wise to keep a large number of bees on a small property.
- Be extremely careful when you are moving bees from one location to another and take proper precautions to protect bystanders along the way.
- It is your responsibility to replace any aggressive bees with more docile ones.
- If your bees start to frequent your neighbors swimming pool or hot tub, you will need to provide them with a water source closer to their hive.
- Consider placing your hives in areas not visible to the public. If your neighbors consistently see your bees, they may consider them a nuisance.
- Make sure that there are signs or a fence to warn and keep children away from the danger of the bee hives.

Bees are a vitally important part of our environment, so we need to give them the best home possible while also protecting ourselves and those around us. By following these simple precautionary measures you can help protect yourself and others from the hazards bees impose.



No one wants to think about suffering a loss. In the unfortunate event you do have a loss, our **ANPAC Five Star Claim Service<sup>SM</sup>** is designed to provide assurance and confidence to our policyholders throughout the claims process.

**24-Hour Claims Hotline 1-800-333-2860**

<sup>1</sup>Benjamin, A. (2010, May 2). Fears for crops as shock figures from America show scale of bee catastrophe. Retrieved December 3, 2010, from The Observer: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/may/02/food-fear-mystery-beehives-collapse>