

THE AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY

# Biosecurity Code of Practice

VERSION 1

Nationally endorsed by industry

July 2016

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# Introduction

## THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice (the Code) has been developed in consultation with beekeepers and governments to provide a clear framework for Australian beekeepers to engage in best-practice biosecurity. The objectives of the Code are to:

- Increase productivity in the Australian honey bee industry by improving the general level of pest and disease control by Australian beekeepers.
- Assist beekeepers in recognising exotic pests and diseases of bees and preparing for an exotic or emerging disease response.
- Ensure beekeepers conduct regular surveillance for the presence of notifiable exotic and endemic pests and diseases.
- Assist in the management of significant endemic diseases of bees, particularly American foulbrood (AFB).
- Facilitate the cross-border movement of bees through adoption of a single national code for biosecurity practices

To ensure the future viability and sustainability of the Australian honey bee industry.

The Code underpins the National Bee Biosecurity Program and is based on the principles of good biosecurity. It describes the outcomes a beekeeper needs to achieve for good pest and disease prevention and control. It is not a manual on how to keep bees; the Code tells beekeepers what they must achieve but how they achieve it will be up to the individual and will be influenced by their situation. The standards set in the Code are only those things that all beekeepers should be doing to minimise the impact of pests and diseases on their own hives and those of their fellow beekeepers.



## THE PRINCIPLES OF GOOD BIOSECURITY

The Code has been developed to incorporate fundamental biosecurity principles into the practices of all Australian beekeepers.

In the context of beekeeping, **biosecurity** can be defined as **a set of preventive measures designed to reduce the risk of introduction and spread of pests or diseases in bees**, and the principles of good beekeeping biosecurity describe the actions a beekeeper should take to minimise the impact of pests and diseases on their bees and the bees of other beekeepers.



### Training and planning

Beekeepers and their employees must be appropriately trained in disease and pest prevention, identification and control. Because our understanding of bee pests and diseases and the tools we have available to manage them are continually evolving, regular refreshing of training, even for experienced beekeepers, is important to keep knowledge up to date.

Beekeepers should plan ahead so that they know in advance how they will respond to a disease or pest detection. All beekeepers should have a written biosecurity plan that is regularly updated as their situation changes.

### Reducing exposure of bees to pests and diseases

Exposure of bees to pests and diseases should be minimised. This can be achieved through maintaining strong bee colonies to prevent robbing of hives. Movement of bees into new areas creates new risks for exposure to diseases and, where possible, the movement of hives should be kept to a minimum. At the very least known disease “hot spots” should be avoided. This is often difficult for commercial beekeepers who must follow honey flow or pollination opportunities but, as a fundamental biosecurity principle, movements should be minimised.

Bees, feed and equipment should only be obtained from a reliable and reputable source. Introduced bees should be segregated (quarantined) and tested pre-purchase or post-arrival to ensure freedom from disease. Second-hand equipment should be sterilised before introduction. Beekeepers must not allow other bees to access honey from their hives on plant and equipment.

### Observing bees for signs of pests and diseases

Bees, brood and hive material must be regularly inspected for evidence of pests and diseases – early detection means faster control and minimal spread. Regular examination and testing for American foulbrood is essential and examination for exotic mites and, on mainland Australia, Braula fly should be part of the routine disease surveillance protocol. Unless a disease like Varroa mite is detected quickly after its arrival in Australia there is little chance it will be eradicated. Detection or suspicion of any notifiable disease or any unusual disease in an apiary must be promptly reported to the local state or territory authority.

### Controlling pests and diseases

Diseased hives are less productive than healthy, well-managed hives and are a threat to other beekeepers. All beekeepers have an obligation to ensure that their management practices do not put other beekeepers' bees at risk and pests and diseases must be actively controlled to ensure they do not spread within the apiary or to other apiaries. Beekeepers should have pre-established response plans for potential pest and disease situations (i.e. they should know in advance what to do if they detect a pest or disease).

### Controlling the spread of undetected disease in an apiary

Beekeeping activities are a major cause of spread of disease between hives within an apiary through transfer of disease on infected equipment and hive components. Often this occurs before the disease is apparent in the apiary. A barrier system, where larger apiaries are divided into smaller, individually identified sub-units and the movement of bees and equipment between these sub-units is eliminated or strictly controlled, is one example of a management technique that will limit the spread of any introduced pest or disease and assist tracing of the source of infection.



### Keeping accurate records

Good record keeping is an important part of any business and complete records must be kept of all biosecurity-related actions and observations. Hives or groups of hives should be clearly identified and accurate records of movements kept for traceability. Templates for record keeping are very simple and are available through most beekeeping organisations and societies or can be downloaded from [beeaware.org.au](http://beeaware.org.au).

### Hive and equipment maintenance

Hives must be maintained to assist bees in defending their hives and to prevent leakage of honey. Equipment and vehicles should be kept clean and well maintained.

With these principles in mind, the Code has been written to provide a set of clear outcomes that all beekeepers need to achieve to raise the overall level of disease management in Australian bees.

### Is the Code compulsory?

Some sections of the Code are already mandatory under existing state and territory legislations but to achieve a consistent national approach to pest and disease prevention and control ALL beekeepers need to be proactive in the management of their apiaries. For this reason, the honey bee industry is working with state and territory governments to make compliance with Part B of this Biosecurity Code of Practice compulsory for all beekeepers and compliance with Part C compulsory for beekeepers who manage 50 or more hives.

Until the Code is mandated, compliance with requirements that are not already a part of state or territory law will be voluntary and beekeepers will be helped with their understanding of, and compliance with, the Code's requirements by a team of *Bee Biosecurity Officers* employed through the industry-funded National Bee Biosecurity Program. It is anticipated this phase-in time will be approximately 24 months. The aim is not to punish beekeepers but to positively assist all beekeepers in raising the overall level of pest and disease management across Australia.

### Monitoring compliance with the Code

After the phase-in period and the Code has been mandated by state and territory governments, compliance will be actively monitored through a combined system of self-certification and both targeted and random inspection of beekeepers' records. Initially this monitoring will focus on beekeepers who manage 50 or more hives. They will be required to certify each year that they are in compliance with the Code including that they have maintained appropriate records.

In addition, the records of a sample of beekeepers in each state and territory will be inspected and their biosecurity practices will be assessed by a Bee Biosecurity Officer to provide an independent appraisal of their compliance. Using the principle that "if it's not written down, it wasn't done", this inspection of records and assessment of biosecurity practices will give a high level of assurance that a beekeeper is complying with this Code. If there are any concerns with the beekeeper's records, the assessment may also include physical examination of hives.

The Australian Honeybee Industry Council is working with organisations that manage quality assurance (QA) for the industry to incorporate this Code into routine QA programs. Once this is achieved, beekeepers who successfully participate in a QA program will not be subjected to further assessment unless the Bee Biosecurity Officer is notified of a potential problem.

### Revision of the Code

The Code will be regularly reviewed and revised as needed to ensure it continues to meet the contemporary needs of the honeybee industry. The first review will be within 5 years of implementation. At this review, the number of hives a beekeeper may manage before Part C of the Code becomes mandatory will be re-evaluated.



# The Australian Honey Bee Industry CODE OF PRACTICE

## PART A: INTERPRETATION AND SCOPE

### Definition of terms used in THE CODE

Throughout the Code, defined words are in **bold italics**. State and territory legislation may have slightly different definitions for some of these terms but for the purposes of this Code of Practice:

**American foulbrood** means infection of a hive by *Paenibacillus* larvae spores.

**Apiary** means a group of one or more hives assembled in one area or location for beekeeping operations.

**Appliance** means any article, apparatus or implement used in connection with the keeping of bees or the extraction or storage of honey.

**Approved** means approved by the relevant state or territory authority (see definition below).

**Approved bee pest and disease management course** means:

- a. Unit AHCBEK306A (Manage pests and disease within a honey bee colony) of the Certificate III in Beekeeping or any replacement unit approved by the AgriFood Skills Australia, or
- b. any equivalent course approved for the purpose by the **relevant state or territory authority**.

**Approved laboratory** means a testing laboratory approved by the **relevant state or territory authority** for the purposes of testing honey for the presence or absence of American foulbrood spores.

**Assessor** means a person approved for the purpose of assessing records and/or inspecting hives to verify a beekeeper's compliance with this Code of Practice. This will usually be the Bee Biosecurity Officer or another approved officer from a state or territory authority or an approved quality assurance auditor.

**Beekeeper** means any person who keeps bees or a person who is in control of bees or hives. This includes apiary managers.

**Beekeeper Biosecurity Training and Assessment Program** means a training program and multiple-choice questionnaire, administered by an approved body, to assess a beekeeper's knowledge of the prevention, identification, reporting and control of significant pests and diseases of bees. This may be a computer-based program and questionnaire.

**Code** means the "Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice" (Sections A, B, C and D of this document).

**Foundation** means material impressed with the pattern of cell bases on which bees build comb.

**Hive** means any receptacle, or any component of a receptacle, which houses bees, which has housed bees, or is intended to house bees. This includes swarm catch boxes specifically placed with the intention of catching swarming bees.

**Hive identification code** means the hive identification code, registration number or other brand allocated to the beekeeper by the relevant state or territory authority.

**Notifiable disease** means a pest, disease, agent, syndrome or substance declared as notifiable by the relevant state or territory authority where the bees are located. In South Australia, these are referred to as "notifiable conditions", in Queensland as "notifiable incidents". All states and territories have agreed to declare the following bee pests and diseases as notifiable:

- Tracheal mite (*Acarapis woodi*)
- American foulbrood (*Paenibacillus larvae*)
- European foulbrood (*Melissococcus plutonius*)
- Tropilaelaps mite (*Tropilaelaps clareae* and *T. mercedesae*)
- *Varroa destructor*
- *Varroa jacobsoni*

Some states and territories have additional notifiable pests and diseases that are of significance in that state or territory (see over page).



**Relevant state or territory authority** means the person (including his or her delegate) in each Australian state or territory vested with the authority register beekeepers and to grant approvals or exemptions in relation to this Code. They are:

STATE OR TERRITORY	RELEVANT PERSON	DEFINING LEGISLATION
Australian Capital Territory	Chief Veterinary Officer	<i>Animal Diseases Act 2005</i>
New South Wales	Director General	<i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i>
Queensland	Chief Executive	<i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i>
Victoria	Minister for Agriculture and Food Security	<i>Livestock Disease Control Act 1994</i>
South Australia	Chief Inspector of Stock	<i>Livestock Act 1997</i>
Tasmania	Chief Veterinary Officer	<i>Animal Health Act 1995</i>
Western Australia	Director General	<i>Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007</i>
Northern Territory	Chief Inspector of Livestock	<i>Livestock Act 2009</i>



### Interpretation of the Code

The **Code** contains elements that a **beekeeper** must do and some elements that a **beekeeper** should do. Where “**must**” is used, industry will be seeking agreement from governments to mandate (regulate) these sections of the **Code** so that a **beekeeper** will have no discretion about complying – failure to comply with a “**must**” will be an offence that may render the beekeeper liable to be fined or prosecuted. These are identified in the **Code** as a **REQUIREMENT**.

Where “**should**” is used, this is considered highly desirable or best practice and **beekeepers** are strongly encouraged to comply with the element. It is not, however, mandatory and failure to comply will not be illegal. These are identified in the **Code** as a **RECOMMENDATION** and are grouped in PART D.

### Scope of the Code

**PART B** of the **Code** (sections 1 – 8) applies to ALL beekeepers and specific requirements are marked in **green**.

**FOR ALL BEEKEEPERS**



**PART C** of the **Code** (sections 9 – 11) applies only to beekeepers with 50 or more hives. Requirements are marked in **purple**.

**FOR BEEKEEPERS with more than 50 hives**



Therefore, **beekeepers** who manage 50 or more hives must comply with ALL of Part B and Part C of the **Code**. Although Part C is not mandated for smaller **beekeepers**, they are encouraged to adopt these requirements as best practice where appropriate.

**PART D** of the **Code** (sections 12 and 13) contains two further recommendations that are considered to be best practice. These recommendations are marked in **blue**. Although not a requirement, all beekeepers are strongly encouraged to adopt these two recommendations and incorporate them into their apiary management plan.

### State and territory legislation takes precedence over the Code

All states and territories have legislation applying to beekeepers and the practice of beekeeping. The Code does not replace this state or territory legislation but is complementary to it. For the most part, the Code aligns with state and territory legislations but this is not always possible. Where the Code contradicts local state or territory legislation, the state or territory legislation takes precedence.





## PART B: THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL BEEKEEPERS

### 1. Beekeepers must be registered

It is essential that there is an up to date register of beekeepers and their contact details so they can be notified quickly in the event of an emergency disease or natural disaster. It is also important that up to date information on the number of hives and beekeepers present in each state and territory of Australia is available to inform decisions on disease control and eradication.

Registration is already compulsory except in Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. The honey bee industry is working with all state and territory governments to implement universal mandatory registration under nationally consistent guidelines.

#### REQUIREMENT

- 1.1 Where law requires it, a **beekeeper** must register with their **relevant state or territory authority** and pay the prescribed fee (if any) set by that authority.
- 1.2 At the time of registration, in addition to other details required by the registering authority, the **beekeeper** must provide an accurate count of the number of **hives** under the **beekeeper's** control.

### 2. Beekeepers must report notifiable diseases

The requirement to report detection or suspicion of notifiable diseases exists in all states and territory legislation but it is included in the Code to reinforce this very important obligation. The prompt reporting of notifiable diseases is essential for control and eradication. Governments also use disease reporting to compile disease prevalence data to support trade with interstate and overseas partners.

Individual states and territories have different reporting requirements and/or exemptions for reporting notifiable diseases and all beekeepers must ensure that they are aware of these requirements and comply with them.

#### REQUIREMENT

- 2.1 A **beekeeper** must report the detection or suspicion of any **notifiable disease** to their **relevant state or territory authority** by the quickest practicable means. Verbal reports should be followed up in writing (for example, by e-mail, text message (SMS), fax or letter).
- 2.2 A **beekeeper** must have knowledge of the pests and diseases that are **notifiable diseases** in the state or territory where their **hives** are located.



### 3. Hives must be regularly inspected for pests and diseases

Good biosecurity is a shared responsibility between all beekeepers and all beekeepers have an obligation to take steps to minimise the risk of pest and disease spread both within their own apiaries and to other beekeepers' apiaries. As part of this obligation, all beekeepers must regularly look for pests and diseases in their hives and do so in a manner that will likely detect any present that may weaken the hive or could spread to another hive. The Code does not go into detail on how the inspections are made because there are a number of equally good methods. It is the responsibility of individual beekeepers to ensure that their inspection techniques are adequate to detect visual evidence of pests or diseases.

The Code requires beekeepers to inspect their hives at least twice per year and keep accurate records of their finding. This is the minimum requirement for good bee husbandry and beekeepers are encouraged to inspect more frequently. Detection or suspicion of any notifiable pest or disease must be reported to the relevant state or territory authority as soon as possible (see Part B 2.1).

A further requirement is that at least one hive in every apiary is examined at least twice per year for evidence of exotic mites and, on mainland Australia, Braula fly. Early detection of exotic pests is essential if Australia is to have any chance at eradicating an incursion and this requirement for all beekeepers to actively look for these pests will greatly enhance the national surveillance system.

#### REQUIREMENT

- 3.1** A *beekeeper* must examine each *apiary* under their control by visually inspecting each *hive* for general *hive* strength and for the presence of pests and diseases. Inspections must be carried out:
- a. In a manner that will enable likely detection of any visual evidence of a pest or disease present in the *hive* and at least involving the visual inspection of the equivalent of three full-depth frames of brood after shaking off adult bees, and
  - b. as often as necessary to minimise inter-hive spread of any pest or disease and/or colony death, and
  - c. in any other case at least twice in every year, at a minimum of 4 consecutive calendar months apart.
- 3.2** In at least 2 inspections per year (at a minimum of 4 consecutive calendar months apart) at least one *hive* in each *apiary* must be examined for the presence of arthropod pests, including Varroa and Tropilaelaps mites, using one of the following methods:
- a. Sugar shake
  - b. Alcohol wash
  - c. Drone uncapping

### 4. Beekeepers must control or eradicate pests and diseases and must manage weak hives

If a beekeeper finds a pest or disease in a hive they must take appropriate steps to manage its impact on the infected hive(s) and to prevent its spread to other hives. Robber bees provide a major pathway for spread of infectious diseases so maintaining strong hives is an important preventative measure.

If the pest or disease is a notifiable disease it must be reported to the relevant authority and controlled and/or eradicated in accordance with state or territory legislation (see Part B 2.1).

American foulbrood (AFB) is the most significant bee disease already present in Australia and it can have a devastating impact on individual apiaries. If AFB is detected, a beekeeper is required to take action to bee-proof the infected hive(s) and to destroy or sterilise the hive(s) as soon as practicable. Elimination of AFB is part of good beekeeping and no compensation will be payable to the beekeeper for hives destroyed due to AFB infection unless an industry-funded compensation scheme is in effect in that state or territory. Because antibiotics do not kill AFB spores but may mask the symptoms of the disease, their use to control AFB is prohibited.

The Tasmanian Foulbrood Best Management Practice Guideline takes precedence over this section for apiaries located in Tasmania.

## REQUIREMENT

- 4.1 A **beekeeper** must take all reasonable actions required to minimise the likelihood that a pest or disease detected in their **hive** will either weaken the **hive** or be transferred to another **hive**.
- 4.2 Any weak **hive** must be managed to ensure that it does not become attractive to robber bees.
- 4.3 Any dead **hive** or any **hive** with insufficient bees to prevent robbing by other bees must be immediately removed from the **apiary** and/or managed in a way that prevents robbing and renders the **hive** and any honey that may leak from the **hive** impervious to robber bees.
- 4.4 If a **beekeeper** identifies **American foulbrood** in a **hive** they must, after the field bees have returned to the **hive**, immediately isolate the affected **hive** and any contaminated **appliances** and take steps to prevent the risk of spread of disease from the **hive**. This includes:
  - a. Destruction of all bees in the **hive**, and
  - b. rendering and maintaining the **hive** and **appliances** bee-proof until they are cleaned, sterilised or destroyed as appropriate. In this context “bee-proof” means eliminating bee access to the affected **appliances**, **hive** and **hive** contents including honey that may leak from the **hive**.
- 4.5 If it is not reasonable to immediately implement the steps in 4.4 and the **hive** is not in danger of being robbed, they must be completed within seven (7) days.
- 4.6 A **beekeeper** must eliminate **American foulbrood** from an infected **hive** by sterilisation or destruction as soon as is reasonable but, in any case, before sale or reuse of the **hive**.
- 4.7 If a **beekeeper** elects to sterilise an infected **hive** it must be either:
  - a. Subjected to gamma irradiation at a minimum radiation dose of 10 kiloGray, or
  - b. dipped for a minimum of 10 minutes in hot wax held at a minimum temperature of 150°C. Complete records of the process including observed temperatures of the wax at the start and end of each dipping must be maintained, or
  - c. treated by another method approved by the **relevant state or territory authority**.
- 4.8 Frames, combs and **hive** mats and any plastic parts must not be dipped in hot wax but must be destroyed by burning or irradiated as appropriate.
- 4.9 If **American foulbrood** cannot be eliminated through sterilisation, the **hive** must be destroyed by either:
  - a. Burning and burial of the remnants so that they are covered by at least 30 cm of soil, or
  - b. any other means approved by the **relevant state or territory authority**.
- 4.10 A **beekeeper** is not entitled to any compensation for the value of **hives**, **appliances** or equipment infected with **American foulbrood** and subsequently destroyed to achieve compliance with this Code unless an industry-funded compensation scheme is in place in their state or territory.
- 4.11 **Appliances** likely to be contaminated with **American foul brood** must be scrubbed or steam cleaned to remove all traces of honey, beeswax and propolis prior to rinsing in clean water.
- 4.12 A **beekeeper** must not use any antibiotic for the purposes of controlling **American foulbrood** in **hives**.



## 5. Beekeepers must maintain records of biosecurity-related actions and observations

Good record keeping is critical to good beekeeping and good biosecurity. It provides a record of actions that were undertaken and accurate records are essential for tracing the source of disease outbreaks. It is also important that records are contemporaneous, that is, they are made at, or close to, the time that the action or observation being recorded was taken.

The records required under this section of the Code are the minimum all beekeepers should keep of biosecurity-related actions and observations. Example templates for record keeping are available at [beeaware.org.au](http://beeaware.org.au) to assist beekeepers with compliance with this requirement.

### REQUIREMENT

5.1 All *beekeepers* must keep legible records of:

- a. The dates of all *apiary* inspections and observations from the inspections including an assessment of the overall strength of the *hives* in the *apiary*, any pests or diseases found in the *hives* and the method used for detection of arthropod pests specified in Part B 3.2.
- b. Details of all actions taken to manage any pests or diseases in the *apiary*.
- c. Details of sampling method, date(s) of collection, testing body and the results of all honey tests or other independent assessments for the presence of *American foulbrood*.
- d. Details of movements of *hives* (including swarm catch boxes); including dates, numbers, geographic locations.
- e. Details of introductions of any bees and used *hives* or *hive* components (with or without bees) from external sources; including the date of introduction and the supplier or source.
- f. Details of biosecurity-related training by the *beekeeper* and any employees of the *beekeeper*.

5.2 Records may be paper-based or electronic.

5.3 Records must be retained for a minimum of 3 years.

## 6. Hives must be appropriately constructed and branded

Hives (including swarm catch boxes) must be maintained in good condition to minimise the risk of disease spread. If bees can only enter and leave the hive through the entrance designed by the hive manufacturer this will assist bees defend their hives from robber bees.

To facilitate the hive inspection required in Part B section 3 of the Code, all hives must have removable combs. Top bar hives are permitted but only if the combs can be individually and separately removed from the hive for inspection.

This section also contains a requirement that all hives must be branded in accordance with state or territory regulations.

### REQUIREMENT

6.1 A *beekeeper* must ensure that each *hive* (including swarm catch boxes) is manufactured and maintained so as to have intact external surfaces with bee access only permitted via specifically designed and manufactured access points.

6.2 All *hives* must be maintained in way that allows combs to be individually and separately removed from the *hive* for easy inspection.

6.3 A *hive* placed for the purpose of catching bee swarms (a swarm catch box) must only contain foundation. Frames already drawn or that contain brood, honey or pollen are not permitted.

6.4 Each *hive* must be clearly and legibly marked with the *beekeeper's* allocated *hive identification code* in accordance with relevant state or territory legislation.

6.5 A *hive* placed for the purpose of catching bee swarms (swarm catch box) that is not on the property where the *beekeeper* normally resides must also be identified with the *beekeeper's* name (or company name) and a contact telephone number, in characters at least 25 mm in height.

## 7. Beekeepers must not allow hives, or appliances to become exposed or neglected

Allowing hives or appliances to become exposed or neglected is an offence in all states and territories. Robbing of exposed or neglected hives is a major pathway for the spread of pests and disease and this Section is included in the Code to reinforce the importance of the beekeepers biosecurity obligation and the importance of properly caring for hives. The appropriate care of hives also means ensuring bees have ready access to suitable water so this requirement is also included.

### REQUIREMENT

- 7.1** A *beekeeper* must not allow a used *hive*, part of a used *hive* (including frames, combs, honey or beeswax) or an *appliance* containing honey to be exposed in a manner or under conditions likely to attract robber bees; including during transportation.
- 7.2** A *beekeeper* must not do any of the following:
- Abandon a *hive* previously kept by the *beekeeper*, or
  - neglect the management or care of a *hive* kept by the *beekeeper* to the extent that the *hive* is likely to become infected with disease or attract robber bees, or
  - fail to destroy or properly dispose of any unwanted bees or part of a *hive* (including frames, combs, honey or beeswax).
- 7.3** A *beekeeper* must ensure bees under his or her care have access to water suitable to sustain the bees.

## 8. Beekeepers must allow their operation to be assessed

The record keeping required in Part B section 5 of the Code provides the key to monitoring compliance with the Code. All beekeepers are required to keep records and beekeepers in charge of 50 or more hives are required to certify their compliance with this Code annually (see Part C section 11).

All beekeepers may at some time have their records examined by the Bee Biosecurity Officer or other authorised person to verify this self-certification and beekeepers are required to cooperate with the assessment and make their records available. An examination will include a review of the beekeeper's records and may include one or more on-site visits to inspect individual hives, appliances or equipment.

These assessments will focus on beekeepers in charge of 50 or more hives but the requirement to make records available applies to ALL beekeepers and smaller beekeepers may be inspected if a serious breach of the Code is suspected.

There will be no cost to the beekeeper for the initial assessment but if the assessor determines that the beekeeper is not in compliance with the Code, the beekeeper may be given the opportunity to rectify the failing within a specified period of time and the beekeeper will be responsible for any costs associated with re-inspection of the operation to verify compliance with the Code.

### REQUIREMENT

- 8.1** If a *beekeeper* is notified that they will be subjected to review of records by an *Assessor* for compliance with the *Code* the *beekeeper* must, within 30 days of any request:
- Comply with all reasonable requests from the *Assessor* for access to the *beekeepers* records and provide any additional information.
  - Comply with all reasonable requests from the *Assessor* to inspect the *beekeepers hives* and *appliances*.
- 8.2** The *beekeeper* will be liable for the reasonable costs of any re-assessment to verify rectification of any non-compliance with the *Code* identified by the *Assessor*.



## FOR BEEKEEPERS with more than 50 hives



### PART C: ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR BEEKEEPERS WHO MANAGE 50 OR MORE HIVES

Commercial beekeepers are more likely to move hives around the country and move into areas of high bee density. They pose a greater risk of disease spread to other commercial beekeepers and it is appropriate that they should have a higher level of biosecurity. Part C of the Code contains additional requirements for these beekeepers.

#### 9. Beekeepers must demonstrate a minimum level of knowledge of pest and disease identification and management

All people working with bees must know how to identify pests and diseases in their hives and must have up-to-date knowledge on how to manage detected pests or diseases. This Section of the Code requires beekeepers who manage 50 or more hives to demonstrate that they have this knowledge by undertaking a formal assessment within 12 months of first registering or, if already registered, within 3 years of the implementation of this Code. This assessment can be in the form of an on-line *Beekeeper Biosecurity Training and Assessment Program* or attendance at an approved training course on the management of bee pest and diseases. To make sure knowledge is up to date, beekeepers will be required to recertify their knowledge by taking an on-line course or attending an approved training course at least once every 3 years.

While this Section of the Code is only mandatory for beekeepers managing 50 or more hives, beekeepers with fewer hives are strongly encouraged to regularly undertake training in the identification and management of bee pests and diseases. The on-line *Beekeeper Biosecurity Training and Assessment Program* will provide a low-cost opportunity for beekeepers with a smaller number of hives to regularly update their knowledge.

#### REQUIREMENT

- 9.1 This requirement applies only to **beekeepers** who manage 50 or more **hives**.
- 9.2 Within 12 months of first registering or, if already registered, within 3 years from the implementation date of this **Code**, a **beekeeper** must successfully complete either:
  - a. An **approved pest and disease management course**, or
  - b. the **Beekeeper Biosecurity Training and Assessment Program**.
- 9.3 Subsequent to initial compliance with 9.2 above, a **beekeeper** must have completed one of the programs described in 9.2(a) or 9.2(b) above in the 3 years prior to any application for re-registration.
- 9.4 The **beekeeper** will be responsible for any costs associated with the training and assessment.

#### 10. Beekeepers must have honey tested annually for American foulbrood

American foulbrood (AFB) is the most widespread and significant bee disease in Australia. Early infections may be difficult to detect visually and laboratory evaluation of honey for AFB spores remains the most sensitive and accurate test for detection of the disease. Laboratory testing may also detect AFB before it has any visible impact on the hive.

This section requires commercial beekeepers (50 hives or more) to have an annual, independent test of their apiary for the disease. This will detect disease present at low levels and will provide a snapshot of the level of AFB in different geographical areas. Monitoring changes in the level of disease over time will also provide some evidence of the effectiveness of this Code.

The beekeeper is only required to have one test conducted on a pooled honey sample collected from at least 20% of their hives. More extensive testing, either through a laboratory or by using AFB test kits, is recommended to assist with AFB detection and control.

Control of AFB is a major burden on the honeybee industry. It is essential that all beekeepers, regardless of their hive numbers, should monitor their apiary for AFB so, while this Section of the Code is only mandated for beekeepers managing 50 or more hives, smaller beekeepers are strongly encouraged to regularly test their hives for the presence of AFB.

## REQUIREMENT

- 10.1** This Section applies only to **beekeepers** who manage 50 or more **hives**.
- 10.2** A **beekeeper** must have their **hives** independently tested for the presence of **American foulbrood** at least once in every 12 consecutive months by:
- The microbiological examination of a representative, pooled honey sample by an **approved laboratory**, or
  - any other method approved by the **relevant state or territory authority**.
- 10.3** Where a **beekeeper** sends honey to a honey packer, the honey sample may be collected by the packer from submitted honey containers and consigned to an **approved laboratory**.
- 10.4** Where a **beekeeper** does not send honey to a honey packer, the **beekeeper** must submit to an **approved laboratory** one or more pooled honey samples collectively containing honey from at least 20% of the total number of **hives** under their management, chosen at random. Samples can be collected during the routine extraction of honey.
- 10.4** The **beekeeper** will be liable for all costs of collection, transportation and testing of honey samples collected for compliance with this **Code**.

## 11. Additional Information Beekeepers with 50 or More Hives Must Provide Annually

This Section details the additional information a beekeeper with 50 or more hives must provide each year to enable the assessment of their compliance with the Code. This includes a declaration from the beekeeper that their operation and management of their bees is in compliance with the Code including requirements, where applicable, for hive inspections, pest and disease management, record keeping, AFB testing and training. Making a false declaration is a serious offence and may result in a fine or prosecution. A template for declaration is provided in Appendix 1.

## REQUIREMENT

- 11.1** This Section applies only to **beekeepers** who manage 50 or more **hives**.
- 11.2** In addition to any other information required by the **relevant state or territory authority**, all applications for renewal of registration as a **beekeeper** must be accompanied by an accurate declaration, in the prescribed format, certifying:
- The **beekeeper's** status in respect to demonstration of knowledge of pest and disease management detailed in Section 9 of the **Code**.
  - The date, testing laboratory and result of the most recent independent laboratory honey test for **American foulbrood**.
  - That the **beekeeper** management and operation is fully compliant with the **Code**.
- 11.3** In any year where the **beekeeper** is not required to re-register (because their registration extends for more than one calendar year) the information prescribed in 11.2 (a), 11.2 (b) and 11.2 (c) must be provided to the **relevant state or territory authority** on the anniversary date of the **beekeeper's** registration.



## PART D: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL BEEKEEPERS

### 12. Apiary sites should be identified

The identification of apiary sites with clearly visible signage bearing contact details will enable the beekeeper to be contacted quickly in the event of a natural disaster emergency (e.g. bushfire) or other potential threat to the bees (e.g. exotic disease incursion, pesticide spray drift). Although hives are identified in most jurisdictions with brands or registration numbers, this does not facilitate rapid contact with the hive owner. This requirement is not mandatory but all beekeepers are encouraged to comply.

This does not apply to hives or swarm catch boxes located on the beekeeper's normal place of residence.

#### REQUIREMENT

**12.1** All occupied **apiary** sites, not on the **beekeeper's** normal place of residence, should be identified by a clearly visible notice legibly showing the **beekeeper's** name (or company name) and a contact telephone number in lettering no less than 25 mm high. This is in addition to any other requirements of relevant state or territory legislation.

**12.2** **Beekeepers** are strongly encouraged to use the template available on the Plant Health Australia website at: [planthealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Honey-Bee-biosecurity-sign.pdf](http://planthealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Honey-Bee-biosecurity-sign.pdf)

### 13. Beekeepers should maintain a barrier system of hive management

A major method of disease spread within an apiary or between apiaries is through the beekeeper transferring infected material between hives prior to disease symptoms being detected. A well-managed barrier system will contain potential spread to within beekeeper-defined units, and enable the beekeeper to trace both the source and spread of the disease, facilitating eradication.

A barrier system is a method of dividing apiaries into smaller sub-units and ensuring there is no transfer of potentially infected materials between the sub-units. Hives and hive components in one sub-unit are not interchanged with those from another sub-unit. Of course, the larger the enterprise, the more important a barrier system becomes but how the barrier system should be implemented will depend on the individual circumstances of the enterprise. Effective barrier systems require forward planning and an understanding of both the disease and the business. Good record keeping is essential and all people working with the bees must understand how the system works.

Some beekeepers treat their entire apiary as a single unit for disease control so the use of a barrier system is not mandatory but it is strongly recommended for all beekeepers.

#### REQUIREMENT

**13.1** A **beekeeper** should maintain a barrier system that divides the **apiary** into one or more clearly identified, isolated sub-units and movement of **hives**, components and **appliances** between these sub-units should be strictly controlled.

**13.2** The barrier system should include the following elements:

- a. Clear, permanent marking and identification of **hives**, components and **appliances** within each sub-unit.
- b. Procedures (including appropriate controls), to prevent non-permitted interchange of **hives**, components and **appliances** between sub-units.
- c. Training and instructions for all employees.
- d. Documentation to enable the tracing and identification of **hive** components, honey and honeycomb to identifiable sub-units.
- e. Procedures to ensure captured bee swarms and acquired used items including **hives** and **appliance** are not introduced to the **apiary** until after appropriate inspection and testing for diseases or sterilisation.









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