

Board of Health Policy Regulations for the Keeping of Honey Bees

Definitions:

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this section, shall have the following meanings ascribed to them:

- (1) "Apiary" shall mean a place where honey bee colonies are kept.
 - (2) "Abutter" shall mean a property adjacent to the property of another.
 - (3) "Beekeeper" shall mean the person(s) responsible for the keeping of honeybees.
 - (4) "Honey Bee" shall mean any life stage of the common domestic honey bee, *Apis mellifera* species.
 - (5) "Colony" shall mean a hive and its equipment and appurtenances, including, honey bees, comb, honey pollen and brood.
 - (6) "Hive" shall mean a structure intended for the housing of a honey bee colony.
 - (7) "Honey" shall mean the natural food product made by honey bees from nectar collected from a flower's nectarines or a plant's extrafloral nectarines.
 - (8) "Flyway" shall mean the direction bees fly leaving their colony; if obstructed, may cause bees to accidentally collide with the obstruction and eventually become aggravated.
 - (9) "Owner" and "Beekeeper" any person who owns or controls hives or beekeeping equipment.
1. No person shall keep honeybees on their premises without obtaining a permit from the Board of Health. Application fees are \$50 for the first year and \$25 for annual renewal with no modifications to the plan or keeper.
 2. A maximum of 2 colonies may be kept on a lot. An exemption may be made for existing colonies in Somerville at the time of the passage of this ordinance provided no public safety issues exist. The beekeeper shall apply for a permit from the Board of Health and pay the application renewal fee.
 3. The beekeeper shall notify abutters of the request to keep honey bees on applicant's property.
 4. The beekeeper shall maintain apiaries in such manner that the same shall not become a public nuisance.
 5. The beekeeper must comply with all Massachusetts General Law's of beekeeping (330 CMR 8.00) including:
 - notify the Commonwealth of the hives within 48 hours of possession
 - mark all hives with the name of the owner, either inside or outside, to be easily found by the inspector. Branding or stencil marking or broad ink pen lettering is recommended.
 - bees moved between sunrise and sunset shall be covered with wire mesh, screen or net.
 6. Each hive shall not exceed five (5) feet in height and twenty (20) cubic feet.
 7. Hives located closer than twenty (20) feet from a principal building on an abutting lot, or on a side yard abutting a street must:
 - Provide a flyway barrier at least six (6) feet in height that shields any part of a property line.
 - The flyway barrier shall consist of a wall, fence, dense vegetation or a combination thereof for a minimum of twenty five (25) feet and meet the Zoning Ordinance regulations.
 8. A constant supply of fresh water shall be provided for all hives; stagnant water that could provide a breeding area for mosquitoes is not permitted.
 9. Any person who keeps bees and sells honey must comply with Massachusetts Department of Public Health Food Protection Program for the sale of unprocessed honey.
 10. The beekeeper must watch the Board of Health video regarding the keeping of bees in Somerville.

11. The Board of Health may suspend, revoke, or decline to renew a beekeeper permit for cause after reasonable notice to the licensee of the ground for the proposed action.
12. If the Board of Health, or its agent, determines that the hive(s) causes disturbances on, or damage to neighboring property or public areas, the Board or its agent may require that the hive be removed, at owner's expense, immediately.