

Belmont Health Department Beekeeping Policy

The Belmont Board of Health is in support of a healthy coexistence between beekeepers, honeybees, the environment, neighbors and the general public. Through education from local beekeepers, support from the Middlesex County Bee Keepers Association, and guidance from the State Apiary Inspector, the Board of Health has the following recommendations to beekeepers in Belmont.

1. **Follow the Massachusetts Beekeepers Association Best Management Practices.** The Best Management Practices can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/ma-beekeepers-association-best-beekeeping-practices/download>
This is an excellent resource for responsible hive management.
2. **Join a beekeeping support group or association!** We encourage all beekeepers, especially new hobbyist, to contact the Middlesex County Bee Keepers Association for guidance and partnership with a local mentor. <http://middlesexbeekeepers.org/>
3. **Notify the Health Department.** Please inform the Health Department that you are keeping bees on your property! The Board of Health would like to be informed of where apiaries are located so we can contact you if a need arises. The State Apiary inspector has also informed us that it would be helpful to know the locations of all domestic hives in MA.
4. **Are you a tenant?** If you are a tenant please acquire written approval from your landlord that you can an apiary on their property.
5. **Register your hives with the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture** at https://massgov.formstack.com/forms/apiary_and_colony_registration and have your bee hives inspected annually by voluntarily submitting a request form: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/agr/farmproducts/apiary/apiary-inspection-request-form.pdf>
6. **Take advantage of educational opportunities in beekeeping.** The Middlesex Bee Keeper Association offers classes every spring. You can find ample opportunities for continuing your education on beekeeping on line.
7. **Promote beekeeping!** Educate others about the advantages of beekeeping and the benefits bees bring to people and the environment.
8. **Avoid a nuisance.** In addition to being knowledgeable about the MA State Laws and regulations as outlined in the Best Management Practices, be aware that the Health Department is charged with enforcement of nuisance regulations. For example, if a hive has a fly way close to and facing a sidewalk, the hive could be determined to be a nuisance to pedestrians. The Board of Health uses the best practices as a guideline in determining nuisance conditions or not. Also, please maintain your yard and apiary in a clean and sanitary condition that does not attract wildlife or pests. The nuisance regulations can be found at: https://www.belmont-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif12826/f/file/file/nuisance_regulations_june_5_07.pdf

If you have any questions please contact the Health Department at 617-993-2720.

