

## GUIDELINES

# Keeping of Bees

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide information in simple easy to read terms so that persons interested in keeping bees are made aware of relevant Local Authority requirements and to clarify how to apply for approval to keep bees.

### Understanding and managing bee swarms

Swarming is a natural way bees reproduce and expand their colonies. Swarms usually emerge in spring or during warm weather. They cluster together to safeguard the queen while scout bees search for a new home.

Swarms are generally harmless if left undisturbed. Typically, they will move on to find a new location, particularly if the weather is clear.

### Safety around bee swarms

If you encounter a swarm:

- Avoid actions that might provoke the swarm: don't hose, pelt with rocks, or use smoke.
- Ensure children and pets are kept at a safe distance.
- Steer clear of the swarm's immediate vicinity.
- Wear suitable footwear to prevent bee stings on the feet.

### Complaints about bees

Bees can be regarded as a nuisance and/or health risks by neighbours and members of the public due to the fear of bee stings, allergies to bee stings, and excessive numbers or swarming. Bee stings are inevitable, and they hurt. Most people have some form of allergic reaction from minor local swelling to a full-scale, life-threatening anaphylaxis. All beekeepers should have an EpiPen available in case you or your family suffer a serious reaction.

If there is a beehive in private property, it is the responsibility of the owner or tenant. However, there is a process to report and handle beehives located on council-managed land.

If a hive or swarm on private land causes issues, it might be considered a nuisance.

Try to raise your concern with the property owner first. If the problem persists, you can make a complaint in writing to the City of Kwinana, provide information and evidence of how it is affecting you. Please contact the Environmental Health Team on 9439 0200 or by [email](#).

If you encounter a beehive on City-managed land causing nuisance, contact the Customer Service Team on 9439 0200 or by [email](#).

**nuisance** means –

- an activity or condition which is harmful or annoying and which gives rise to legal liability in the tort of public or private nuisance at law;
- an unreasonable interference with the use and enjoyment of a person of his or her ownership or occupation of land; or
- interference which causes material damage to land or other property on the land affected by the interference.

### Requirements on keeping bees

You are not permitted to keep more than two bee hives unless approval is granted by the City of Kwinana Environmental Health Department.

While an application is not required if no more than two bee hives are kept, there are still a number of mandatory requirements by the City. If you have beehives, you must have –

- a good and sufficient water supply is located on the land which is readily accessible by the bees situated at distance of less than 5 metres from the hive.
- a screen or other barrier prevents the bees flying low over a street, public place, or adjoining land.
- Each beehive is to be kept at least 9 meters away from any building on any other land, at least 9 metres from any footpath, street, private street or public place, at least 5 meters from boundary of the land and

- where required, the owner or occupier is registered with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development as a beekeeper under the *Agriculture Management (Identification and Movement of Stock and Apiaries) Regulations 2013*. Every hive owned by a beekeeper shall be identified with their registered brand. Please visit DPIRD's website for further information.

Bees or beehives shall not be kept on land so as to create a nuisance.

The City also recommends that you check with your neighbours to find out if they have any serious allergies or concerns. We also recommend that bees are kept in accordance with best management guidelines and practices to prevent your bees from becoming a nuisance and to prevent safety concerns and conflicts from neighbours and members of the public. Please see Useful Links section for further information.

## How do I apply for approval to keep more than two bee hives?

1. Complete an application form for approval to keep more than two bee hives on your land and submit to the City's Environmental Health Services Department via email: [health@kwinana.wa.gov.au](mailto:health@kwinana.wa.gov.au)

The application should include –

- A statement outlining the reasons why an approval is sought.
  - The number of beehives proposed to be kept.
  - A site plan showing land size, the location of bee hives, and the distance of the enclosure from any boundaries and buildings on adjoining land.
  - Written comments from adjoining property owners in relation to your proposal to keep more than two bees (a separate form is required for each property).
  - Where required, proof of registration as a beekeeper under the *Agriculture Management (Identification and Movement of Stock and Apiaries) Regulations 2013*.
2. Payment of fees and charges:
    - An invoice will be issued for payment of the relevant fees and charges associated with the application.
    - The assessment will only begin after all applicable fees have been received.
  3. Application assessment:
    - The application may be refused if any requested outstanding information is not provided within the specified timeframe.
    - An appointment will be made to conduct an inspection of the property for keeping bees to check

on the requirements.

- Prior to determining an application for approval, the local government may consider the views and concerns of any owner or occupier of an adjoining property.

### 4. Approval or refusal of the application

- All outstanding requirements will need to be addressed before an approval with conditions will be issued.
- The City of Kwinana may grant approval, with or without conditions, or refuse to grant approval.
- Where approval is granted subject to conditions, the holder of the approval must comply with those conditions.
- The applicant shall notify the local government of any change in the circumstances on which the approval was based as soon as any change occurs. An approval can be cancelled by the local government if –
  - the holder does not comply with the conditions of approval.
  - there is a change in the circumstances upon which the approval was granted.
  - the granting of the approval causes a nuisance.

## Honey production and processing

The production and processing of honey for sale is subjected to compliance with the Food Act 2008, Food Regulations 2009 and the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

For further information, please contact the City of Kwinana Environmental Health Services on food business registration requirements.

## Complaint investigation

- General nuisances associated with the keeping of bees are managed under the City's *Animal, Environment and Amenity Local Law 2024* (Local Law). Authorised Officers may undertake one or more of the following actions under this Local Law:
  - issue a notice of breach to the requirements for keeping of bees;
  - issue infringement notice(s) with modified penalty for first offence or subsequent offence(s);
  - issue Local Government Act Notice(s); and/or
  - undertake legal proceedings in accordance with the *Local Law and Local Government Act 1995*.
- Public health risks associated with keeping of bees are managed under the Public Health Act 2016 and the Authorised Officer(s) will consider if the person or business involved has taken all reasonable and practicable steps to prevent or minimise harm prior to taking appropriate enforcement actions.



### More information on pest management

- [Bee Swarms](#)
- [List of swarm catchers.](#)



## Useful links

[WA Apiarists Society](#)

[National Best Management Practice for  
Beekeeping in the Australian Environment](#)

[Best-Practice Guidelines for Urban Keeping](#)

[Becoming a beekeeper in WA](#)

[Honey bees and their pests and diseases](#)

