

# Beehive Safety in Schools

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Schools are looking for new and inventive ways to educate and engage their students. One idea that is gaining more traction across the state is establishing a beekeeping program in the school district. Beekeeping can be beneficial and rewarding to build a broader understanding in the ecosystem as a whole. It is important to understand the risks and limit some of the exposure in order to create a successful program.

There are no specific exclusions under our School Entity Liability (SEL) Coverage Form regarding beekeeping. However, there is no coverage for the bees themselves under our Property Coverage Form. This is a higher risk activity due to the risk of bee stings particularly for those with allergies; however, it's a business decision for the Member if they want to take on this risk.

If the Member is going to partner with third party organization on this activity, we would recommend a written agreement outlining what each party will do to install, maintain, and control the apiary. CSDSIP recommends that this agreement reflects each entity's responsibility for their own actions, is required to carry General Liability Coverage, must provide each other with certificates of insurance and must add on the other entity as an additional insured as respects to claims arising out of the insured's negligence. This could also be further protected through a mutual hold harmless, indemnification and defense provision.

## Before starting, consider these items:

- Does the city or county have any codes or permitting requirements related to beekeeping?
- Does the school have enough space to place a hive onsite that is:
  - Away from regular use by students, staff, and patrons?
  - Away from neighboring residential properties?
  - Amendable to the planting of a pollinator garden if needed?
  - Able to be fenced if necessary?

## The following items should be addressed by the requesting person(s) or entities:

- Establish the Roles and Responsibilities of the District
- Identify a program manager
- Locate a beekeeper to serve as your Bee Mentor and maintain a working relationship.
- Schedule and oversee the installation of the hive base and the honeybees.
  - Who is responsible for teaching Hive Safety? Will this be taught to the whole school or just the staff and students in charge of handling the bees?
- Ensure that Safety Rules are documented and posted.
- Establish who is responsible for performing daily and weekly hive checks.
- Establish how you will communicate with staff, students, parents, patrons, and neighbors about the presence of beehives on campus.
  - Who will they contact to ask questions, report concerns, or file a complaint?

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- Consider notifying surrounding neighbors that there is a beehive at the school. Ask them to make their landscapers and exterminators aware so that the use of chemicals that are harmful to the bees are kept at minimum if not completely stopped. This is the best insurance that your hive will survive and thrive!

## Bee Mentor

- The Bee Mentor should be a member of the local bee group and has an interest in education.
- Should be an experienced beekeeper to serve as a Bee Mentor to the Bee Advocates.
- Should be the one who helps the Bee Advocate's journey into the world of beekeeping.
- Should Visit the Observation Hive once a month to ensure all looks well.

## Installation of Hive

- The Hive base installation should be completed by independent contractor or another qualified installer.
- The Bee Mentor will install bees into the hive case.

## Allergies

- How will you notify your staff, the school community, and the community around the school of this apiary?
- What is the safety plan for people who are allergic to bees?

## Honey

- Establish what will happen to the honey harvested from the hive.
- If the honey is to be sold, this raises other risk concerns that need to be addressed.

For additional state specific guidelines review the Best Management Practices For Urban, Suburban And Small Scale Beekeeping provided by the Colorado State Beekeepers Association linked [here](#).

New and exciting activities can be very rewarding for students. Schools should be looking into all the factors of such activities, making sure that the educational benefit outweighs the potential risk.

For additional Colorado resources on Beekeeping, click [here](#).