

NJ Beekeeping Regulations Frequently Asked Questions

Which NJ law says that the NJ Dept. of Agriculture has authority over honeybees/beekeeping and their authority supersedes all municipal regulations?

New Jersey Statutes, Title: 4, AGRICULTURE AND DOMESTIC ANIMALS

Chapter 6: Section: 4:6-24: Regulation of breeding, keeping of honey bees. Section 2. a. “The Department of Agriculture shall regulate the breeding and keeping of honey bees and any activities related thereto”

<http://njlaw.rutgers.edu/collections/njstats/showsect.php?title=4&chapter=6§ion=24&actn=getsect>

Is there a limit to how many hives you can have on your property?

Yes, section 2:24-7.2 states that colony density shall be as follows:

<u>Tract of Land Size</u>	<u>Number of Colonies Allowed</u>
up to 1/4 Acre	3
1/2 Acre	6
3/4 Acre	9
1 Acre	12
Over 1 acre	3 per 1/4 acre not to exceed 40 hives

Also, for every two colonies, there may be one nucleus colony from March 1st through October 31st.

How far from the property line should hives be located?

A beekeeper shall locate all hives a minimum of 10 feet from any property line and at least 20 feet from any roadside, sidewalk, or path.

The regulations say that it's unlawful to keep bees if they pose a direct threat to public health and safety. Who gets to decide if the bees are a threat?

The regulations also state: “as determined, by the State Apiarist or his or her designee.” This means that only the NJ Department of Agriculture, the NJ State Apiarist, or someone they appoint can determine that the bees are being kept in an unsafe manner. This specifically pertains to **how and where** the bees are being kept, as defined by the regulations.

If I am allergic to bee stings, does that constitute a threat to my public safety?

As long as a beekeeper is abiding by and conforming to all the rules and regulations set forth by the NJ Department of Agriculture, an allergy does not constitute a threat to public safety.

If my neighbor has bees, will that mean that I will get more bees in my yard?

Having bees next door will not increase the number of bees visiting your property. The number of flowering plants is what controls the number of bees and other pollinators in your yard.

Honey bees travel great distances to collect food. Honey bees get all of their food from plants, as they are not scavengers like other insects. They visit flowers up to 3 miles from their hive. A typical backyard does not have nearly enough flowers to support a honey bee colony. Around two million flowers are needed to make a single pound of honey, and in New Jersey, colonies are generally making 100 pounds or more.

Most importantly, flowers have a finite amount of nectar and pollen, so regardless of where a hive is located, bees will only visit a yard when the flowers are inviting them with nectar and pollen.

Additionally, bees cruise at altitudes of 30 feet and higher, well above the space that people occupy.

What does it mean when the regulations state, “A beekeeper shall establish a flyway barrier at least six feet in height consisting of a solid wall, fence, dense vegetation, or combination thereof that is parallel to the property line and maintain it to extend 10 feet beyond the colony in each direction?”

The key part of this regulation is, “parallel to the property line.” Its intention is for a beekeeper to maintain a six-foot flyway barrier between his property and that of his neighbor’s adjoining property.

Is there an education requirement to keeping bees?

Yes, the regulations state that within the first year, a beekeeper shall take a beginner/general beekeeping course from an accredited college or university, the State Apiarist, or a local beekeeping club. The New Jersey Beekeepers Association is your best source for information on beekeeping courses. Their website is: www.njbeekeepers.org

Are beekeepers required to have their bee yards registered?

Yes. All bee yards must be registered with the State for the beekeeper to be in compliance with the state regulations. The registration can be found at: https://www-agr.state.nj.us/AG_Apiary/ApiaryApp

Is a beekeeper required to maintain a water source?

Yes, a constant and continuous source of water must be provided by the beekeeper, on the same property as the hives.

Is the beekeeper required to inspect his/her hives?

Yes, all colonies shall be managed by the beekeeper for disease, population management control, and gentleness.

How should a beekeeper manage swarming?

A beekeeper shall manage all hives to limit and promptly address swarming using accepted swarm management techniques for the industry, which may include, but are not limited to, providing adequate room for colony growth, splitting, and requeening.

If I want to sell bees, (nucleus, package, or queens,) am I required to have them inspected?

Yes. The regulations state: “All hives sold in New Jersey must be found by the Department of Agriculture to be apparently free of American foulbrood.” Additionally, it states: “All New Jersey queen breeders, as well as sellers of splits, nucleus or divides must obtain a certificate disclosing number of Varroa mites found per sample and provide a copy of such certificate to the buyer.”

Should every beekeeper join the New Jersey Beekeepers Association?

These guidelines were developed through consultation with the New Jersey Beekeepers Association. They are knowledgeable of the regulations and are a great beekeeping resource. While the regulations do not require a beekeeper to be a member of the New Jersey Beekeepers Association, it is strongly encouraged for all beekeepers to do so. For more information, their website is: www.njbeekeepers.org

If I have a question or concern, whom should I contact?

You should start with your local branch of the New Jersey Beekeepers Association as they can answer many questions, and assist you in finding the best person to help you.

The local contact information can be found at:

<http://www.njbeekeepers.org/Organization.htm>. You can also email the NJ Department of Agriculture at: ContactAg@ag.nj.gov