

# **PENNSYLVANIA APIARY ADVISORY BOARD** **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SAFELY MAINTAINING** **HONEY BEE COLONIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH** **OF PENNSYLVANIA**

This document is commonly referred to as the BEEKEEPER CODE OF CONDUCT and was previously titled VOLUNTARY GENERAL BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR SAFELY MAINTAINING HONEY BEE COLONIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA. This document is reviewed at least twice a year by the Apiary Advisory Board. It is a “living document” and subject to change. Revised April 15, 2024. The current version of this document may be found at [Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Association - Home \(pastatebeekeepers.org\)](https://pastatebeekeepers.org).

**Name & mailing address of beekeeper:**

I hereby voluntarily pledge to follow and abide by the “*Code of Conduct for Safely Maintaining Honey Bee Colonies in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*” as outlined below:

## **Objectives:**

To ensure:

1. The sustainability of the bees and the environment that supports them
2. Public safety and social amenity
3. Good beekeeping practice in line with proven and ethical standards in working with bees and any activity associated with apiculture
4. The maintenance of good relations among all stakeholders

## **Definitions:**

1. **Beekeeping** means the transporting, placing, servicing and maintenance of beehives for honey and bee product production, for pollination or any other activity reasonably necessary for the support of healthy bees.
2. **Apiary** means the location occupied by one or more beehives.
3. **Requeen** means the replacement of the honey bee colony’s queen with another queen by means of a queen cell or a method of controlled release of an adult queen.

**Guidelines:**

I, the beekeeper, agree to:

1. Abide by and remain in compliance with all federal, Commonwealth (state) and local laws as they pertain to honey bees.
2. Ensure, as far as possible, that my bees are of docile and manageable temperament and work toward eliminating bees exhibiting undesirable characteristics by either eliminating those bees or by requeening the colony. In the event that I determine a colony of my bees to be overly aggressive, I will requeen or depopulate the colony.
3. Place hive entrances in such a direction that bees fly across my own property. The use of barriers may be employed to redirect the bees' flight pathway and establish bee flight pathways above six feet.
4. Manage honey bee colonies to minimize swarming.
5. If a natural source of water is not available nearby (within ¼ mile), provide a convenient source of water on the property (April 1 - November 1) that is available to the bees, if one is not otherwise available, to minimize activity at unintended water sources.
6. Not establish an apiary within 50 feet of any pre-existing animal tethered, kenneled, or otherwise prevented from escaping a stinging insect.
7. To manipulate bees in a responsible manner and in suitable weather conditions, especially in urban areas so that no nuisance is caused to people, livestock, residences, businesses or those in the vicinity.
8. If transporting colonies during daylight hours, secure the load and screen entrances or place a net over the colonies to prevent bees from escaping.
9. Post a honey bee caution sign in or near the apiary, as needed.
10. Clearly mark or label hives with beekeeper contact information and PA Department of Agriculture registration number.
11. Strive to ensure good neighborly relations at all times.
12. Practice proven and ethical standards in working and managing my bees or any activity associated with beekeeping.
13. Consider reasonable hive densities for given locations to minimize conflict with adjacent properties. Factors influencing hive density in an area may include: human

density, quality and quantity of plants, and number of bee hives already present. Beekeepers and venues with a beekeeping component may have varying numbers of colonies in an area depending on many factors including: normal agricultural operations, pollination and other contractual requirements, queen bee and/or nucleus colony production, and honey production, and educational needs.

The PA Apiary Advisory Board strongly recommends seeking expert advice from the Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Association, The Penn State Center for Pollination Research, The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Penn State Extension, local beekeeping associations, and universities and colleges with an apiary program in order to determine optimal hive densities. Pennsylvania’s Pollinator Protection Plan (P4) is available at <https://ento.psu.edu/research/centers/pollinators/pollin-spotlight-items/the-pennsylvania-pollinator-protection-plan-p4> and provides helpful information for everyone.

***This is a voluntary Code of Conduct and creates no legal obligations, commitments or enforceable requirements. This Code of Conduct is not intended to and does not create any contractual rights or obligations with respect to the signatory person.***

BEEKEEPER’S SIGNATURE:

\_\_\_\_\_

BEEKEEPER’S PRINTED NAME:

\_\_\_\_\_

DATE SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

The Pennsylvania Apiary Advisory Board is made up of industry leaders and is an advisory group collaborating with the Pennsylvania State University and other state, federal and private partners to enhance the protection of Pennsylvania’s plant and pollinator resources.