

BEEKEEPING

in the CITY OF SAN DIEGO

In January 2012 the City of San Diego amended its Municipal Code to allow residents of single family homes, community gardens, and retail farms to keep and maintain two beehives. The specific regulations are located in Chapter 4, Article 4, Division 4 of the Municipal Code and can be found by downloading the following: [Chap 04 Art 04 Div 04, Beekeeping](#).



Where you locate your apiary is determined by the number of hives and several factors related to distance including zone setbacks. For specific information regarding the zone setback for your property go to the following link and type in your address: [View your property by address](#).

You will then receive the zone name for your property. A link to "More Info" takes you to another page that directs you to the regulations for your zone. When viewing the regulations go to the Development Regulations Table for your zone and look up "Setback Requirements." You can also call the Development Services Department's information line at (619) 446-5000, provide your address, and request the name of your zone and the zoning setback information. You will receive a return call with the information.



BENEFITS

- Fresh natural honey.
- Reduction in the number of aggressive (Africanized) bees in the vicinity of the docile honeybee hive.
- Reduced carbon footprint due to local production.
- Increase in the population of docile honeybees.
- Increased number of pollinators.
- Fresh honey can be used to alleviate some seasonal allergies.

RISKS

The primary risk of beekeeping is bee sting. If you are going to keep bees you will get stung. A small percentage of the population is allergic to bee stings (estimates range from 2 to 5 percent of the population). If you do not know if you are allergic you should have a physician test you. If you are allergic you should not keep bees. The docile honeybees that are permitted by this ordinance are not aggressive. Beekeeping when done properly poses very limited risks to surrounding properties or property owners. The following provide a way to reduce the risks:

- Discuss beekeeping with your neighbors.
- Open/manipulate hives only during favorable weather.
- Survey your surroundings for neighbors and pets before opening/manipulating the hive.
- Face the hive opening away from entrances and walkways, and toward the most distant property line.
- Even if you are not allergic consider getting an epi-pen from your physician, so that one is always on hand.

SUMMARY OF REGULATIONS

- A beekeeper shall register the apiary with the San Diego County Agricultural Commissioner within 30 days of establishing the apiary.
- An apiary of three or more hives must be at least 600 feet from a building used as a residence and 100 feet from the public right-of-way.
- An apiary of one or two hives must be located outside of all setbacks, or fifteen feet from the property line and 20 feet from the public right-of-way, whichever is greater
- An apiary of one or two hives must do the following:
 - Locate the beehive in a secured area.
 - Requeen the beehive every two years.
 - Locate the beehive so that it is not visible from the public right-of way.
 - Surround the beehive with a six-foot tall barrier unless it is at least eight feet above the ground.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is a permit required to keep bees?

Beekeeping in the City of San Diego does not require a permit however, as stated in the regulations beekeepers are required to register their hives with the County of San Diego Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures.



Why do bees sting?

Bees sting only to protect the hive.

How far do honey bees fly to get food?

They can fly three to four miles to collect nectar and pollen but generally no more than one mile.

How much honey does a beehive produce?

On average a hive would produce approximately 25 pounds of honey a season.

How long do bees live?

Worker bees live about 40 days. A queen bee can live up to 5 years but for beekeeping purposes a queen is passed her prime at three years. The regulations require that the beekeeper replace the queen every two years.

Are honey bees responsible for all plant pollination?

Not all but most. Honey bees are responsible at least a third of all our food crops and even cotton crops. Other animals that pollinate include bats, butterflies, and birds.

OTHER INFORMATION RESOURCES

Additional information regarding keeping and maintaining chickens can be found at the following web-sites.

- San Diego beekeeping Society
www.sandiegobeekeepingsociety.com
- American Beekeeping Federation
www.abfnet.org

