

# The Bee Cause Safety Guide



Welcome to the wonderful world of bees! The Bee Cause Project seeks to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards while protecting the planet's precious pollinators. Through observational hives in schools and nonprofits, STEAM curriculum, and beekeeping resources, we hope to strengthen the connection to the shared environment with pollinators that enables both bees and curious minds to thrive.

This document is designed to give your staff and patrons peace of mind about living and working alongside the honey bees on your campus. Honey bees are active creatures with a full daily to-do list. In order for the hive to thrive, the bees must forage for food, build and clean their honeycomb, make honey, feed and care for their brood (baby bees), and protect their hive from intruders. They are extremely good at each of their tasks and perfectly content to work without harm to the humans in their world. But as their hosts, we need to be aware and maintain a healthy respect for them.

## **OUTDOOR SIGNAGE**

All Honey Bee Hives come with a sign to be posted near the beehive entrance on the exterior of the building. This helps alert visitors to the fact that there are bees in the area. Also, it helps to remind people about not using harmful chemicals, especially near the Observation Hive. If the Bee Advocate and Bee Mentor have successfully worked together, the Observation Hive or Langstroth hive will have been placed at an ideal location with regards to the entrances and exits of your building.

## **INDOOR SIGNAGE**

Post The Bee Cause Safety Rules document (below) near the Observation Hive for easy reference by all who visit your building.

## **BEE ENTRANCE**

For the Observation Hive, the bees enter and exit on the outside of the building. If you are outside, please stay clear of the entrance. Bees need about 4 to 5 feet of clearance before they fly up towards the sky! It is a good idea to give them a safe, 10-foot perimeter so that their flight is uninterrupted. Also, bees only live six weeks in the Spring and Summer; so, there are hundreds of bees dying on the way back to the hive or inside the hive. There will be times when a number of bees will be within steps of the landing porch. They will not be in a state to sting; however, if the bees are handled, then the chance a sting will occur is great.

**SWING ARM**

This feature is integral to the purpose of the Observation Hive. When moving the hive, be sure to do so with care. Slowly rotating the hive for better observation is welcomed. Avoid swinging the hive quickly or with a jerky motion, and never hang on the hive.

**BEEES INSIDE THE BUILDING**

The hive case is a sturdy and secure container. Bees cannot fly out, climb out, or chew out. In the rare incident where a bee may have found its way into the building without using the bee entrance, you may gently place a cup over the bee and slide a piece of paper between the cup and surface on which the bee landed. The bee may then be transferred outside.

**BEE ETIQUETTE**

The honey bees are very busy, and for the most part, will not notice you near the Observation Hive. Please keep it that way. Strong vibrations or very loud noises may agitate the bees, and in order to protect the hive, they may sting someone outside. Help the bees feel at home by providing an environment void of extremes in temperature and noise.

**GENERAL SAFETY RULE**

If you have a nurse on staff, she can create and share a document with the appropriate employees including names of staff/students who are allergic to bee stings, as well as any other protocol for your specific school or non/profit. If you do not have a nurse on staff, consider creating a list of your employees or volunteers that may be allergic to bee stings as a precaution.

**REDUCE THE RISK OF BEING STUNG**

1. Never throw anything at bees or agitate them. Remain clear of their hive entry. Never stand in front of the hive entrance/exit, but rather stay to the side to observe.
2. If you come close to a honey bee, remain calm and do not provoke them. Bees are generally very gentle when unprovoked.
3. Most honey bees and insects will not attack if left alone.
4. If a single stinging insect is flying around, remain still. Swinging or swatting at an insect may cause it to sting. Bees will sting in defense of their nest or themselves, but they do not want to!
5. If you are attacked by several stinging insects at the same time, move away from the hive. Bees release a chemical when they sting. This alerts other bees to the intruder. More bees often follow. If this occurs proceed indoors or to a shaded area outside away from the hive.
6. If there is a colony of bees swarming in a tree, remain away from the tree. Do not throw anything at the bees and remain calm, a bee swarm is not concerned with you, but rather the safety of the Queen Bee. Notify an educator or staff member if you see a swarm. All students will be advised to stay away from the identified area until the beekeeper arrives to relocate the bees.

**WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE IS STUNG BY A HONEY BEE**

1. Have someone stay with the person who was stung to be sure that they do not have an allergic reaction.
2. Take the person in question to an educator or the school nurse.
3. Wash the area stung with soap and water.
4. The stinger can be removed using a 4x4-inch gauze, a rough cloth, a credit card, or use a fingernail to scrape over the area. Never squeeze the stinger or use tweezers. It will cause more venom to be released.
5. Apply ice to reduce the swelling.
6. Do not scratch the sting. This will cause the site to swell, itch more, and increase the chances of infection.

**FIRST AID FOR BEE STINGS**

1. Go to the school nurse immediately for closer examination. Apply ice to the sting site.
2. The nurse will scrape the stinger out from the stung area – never squeeze or pull out the stinger.
3. Persons who present mild symptoms of a reaction will be monitored closely and parents will be contacted.
4. Persons who present signs of a severe allergic reaction will be monitored closely, parents immediately contacted, and an EpiPen will be used if deemed absolutely necessary.
5. Parents will be notified by phone or letter that their child suffered a bee sting while at school.
6. If you do not have a school nurse, we recommend designating one or more employees who may be able to assist with First Aid for Bee Stings.
7. We also recommend having a fully stocked First Aid Kit in your building at all times in case a staff member or parent should need it.

**ALLERGIC REACTIONS TO BEE STINGS**

**Insect Sting Warning:** Allergic reactions to bee stings can be deadly. People with known allergies to any insect stings should always carry an insect sting allergy kit (EpiPen) and wear a medical ID bracelet or necklace stating their allergy. Refer to your physician about obtaining either of these.

**Signs of an Allergic Reaction:** Look for swelling that moves to other parts of the body, especially the face or neck. Check for difficulty in breathing, wheezing, dizziness, or a drop in blood pressure. If any of these symptoms occur, seek immediate medical attention. It is normal for the stung area to be sore, have a hard swollen lump, have redness, or be itchy. We advise icing the area for pain relief or an insect sting lotion.

**IF YOU ARE ALLERGIC TO BEES, USE YOUR  
RECOMMENDED TREATMENT IMMEDIATELY!**



## THE BEE CAUSE SAFETY RULES

-  Rotate Hive Case Slowly And Gently
-  Never Hang On The Hive
-  Do Not Tap On The Glass
-  Do Not Block Ventilation Holes
-  Keep Hive Covered When Not In Use
-  Avoid Extreme Temperature Changes In Room
-  Stay Clear Of The Landing Porch
-  If You Are Allergic To Bees, Use Your Recommended Treatment If Needed Immediately!
-  Beehave Near The Beehive!