

The British Beekeepers' Association

Model risk assessment document



Description of activity:	Beekeeping
Assessed by:	Thomas Walker
Approved by:	Thomas Walker
Date of Assessment:	10 th May 2024
Date of Review:	9 th May 2025

This document is a template designed to form a basis for a specific assessment of risk carried out by your school or organisation. It is not a substitute for a full risk assessment of the particular circumstances that will exist at your location. You may also need to amend the format of this document to comply with the agreed standards at your school or organisation.

Risk	Who or what affected?	Mitigation
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low risk, low impact

Risk of bee stings in areas near apiary	Neighbours, those working or playing nearby	<p>Ensure hives are properly sited away from work or play areas. Ensure flight path is not over a footpath, access route or neighbouring garden.</p> <p>Make sure bees are encouraged to fly up and over a hedge or fence. Contact local beekeepers' association to obtain advice on siting.</p> <p>Clear warning signage placed near apiary.</p>
Risk of Swarms	<p>Everyone</p> <p>NB: Although to some an intimidating sight, swarms are not dangerous unless spectators behave recklessly.</p>	<p>Should the bees swarm, office to phone in the following order:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Lead beekeeper <Insert name and telephone no></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Second local beekeeper</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Third beekeeper from local BKA</p>

Low risk, medium impact

Lack of beekeeping knowledge or experience.	Everyone Bees	Join local Beekeepers' Association (BKA) to obtain advice and training. Local BKA will appoint a mentor to help through initial phases.
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Low risk, high impact

Risk of anaphylactic shock following bee sting.	<p>Persons identified through school medical records.</p> <p>Persons with unknown propensity.</p>	<p>Staff and beekeeper(s) aware of risk, see guidance sheet.</p> <p>Emergency procedure to be displayed clearly in a prominent place; including exact location of Apiary.</p> <p>Location of emergency procedure notice and first aid kit to be made clear in briefing.</p> <p>First aider to be identified in briefing.</p> <p>Precise location and access information to be available for relay to emergency services to facilitate rapid access</p>
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		Mobile phone or other communications to be available during bee inspection to call Ambulance Service via 999.
Risk of fall or injury if collecting swarm from a height or difficult location	Lead beekeeper	Assess situation carefully before starting collection. Assemble appropriate equipment. Do not work at height alone. Have means of contacting emergency services to hand. Check phone signal. Ensure any ladder is securely placed. Contact LBA if you are not certain that you can safely handle the situation.
Risk of colony collapse or health of bees declining	Bee colonies, other bees in the immediate area.	Ensure best practise is followed in husbandry procedures. In the early stages of beekeeping, know what a healthy colony looks like; if anything (however trivial) seems amiss, contact your BKA mentor or local bee inspector at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bee-health . The national bee unit also provides excellent free information.
Risk of bee diseases from other apiaries infecting colonies. Resultant loss of bees and equipment	Bee colonies	Join Beebase at http://www.nationalbeeunit.com to receive updates and notifications directly from DEFRA. This also gives access to local bee inspector. Insurance against loss caused by disease included in membership of local BKA or directly by BBKA.
Risk of financial loss due to misdeed or misadventure.	Beekeeper, school or organisation.	Ensure agreed procedures are followed at all times. Follow best practise. Ensure public liability insurer is notified in writing about beekeeping activities. File written response. There is usually no additional premium. Consent form signed by parents of all children wishing to take part in beekeeping activities.
Medium risk, low impact		
Risk of bee stings during inspections.	Those involved in beekeeping activities.	Full briefing delivered before inspection. PPE to be worn correctly and checked by lead beekeeper before inspection commences. Ensure approach route to hive is away from bee flight paths. Beekeepers to approach the hives calmly from the rear. First aider present at all times during beekeeping inspections. Guidance on removal of stings given in briefing.

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		Condition of PPE equipment to be regularly checked.
Ground Maintenance in apiary	Those using power tools, cutting grass	Goggles to be worn. Bee suits to be worn (if required) Ear Defenders, and boots to be worn depending on tools used. No power tools to be used when working alone.

Medium risk, medium impact

Aggressive bees. Increased risk of stings.	Those involved in beekeeping activity or using noisy equipment (lawn mower, hedge cutter etc.) nearby.	Gentle bee varieties used. Bees confined to the hive if weather or other factors make them irritable. Hives worked on only when conditions are right for beekeeping. Any persistently aggressive colony to be re-queened. Bees are appropriately smoked before hive inspection. Lead beekeeper is always in attendance when hive is opened.
Using hammers, nails and other hand tools to build or repair hives. Risk of injury.	Anyone involved in building or maintaining equipment	Safety briefing delivered before commencement of activity. Tools and equipment regularly checked to ensure good condition.
Risk of injury during honey processing.	Anyone involved in activity.	Ensure safety briefing is delivered before activity. Keep surfaces and floor clear and clean during activity to reduce risk of sticky or slippery surfaces. Ensure uncapping knives or folks or any electrical equipment is used safely. Electrical equipment to be regularly tested. Ensure heavily equipment is lifted safely according to correct manual handling procedures.

Medium risk, high impact

Risk of vandalism to bee hives leading to bee stings and swarming	Everyone, vandals	Warning signs to be displayed near apiary. Consider mesh screening around apiary. Bee hives correctly located in quiet location away from public footpaths. Seek advice from local BKA
Slips, trips and falls	Everyone entering	Deliver safety briefing before entering apiary.

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Back injuries from lifting hives	apiary and inspecting hives	<p>Keep apiary tidy and free from debris. Maintain clear access and egress. No running. Maintain quiet and orderly behaviour.</p> <p>Staff and children to be trained in basic manual handling techniques. Apply techniques when carrying out manual handling operations.</p>
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Risk of injury or harm when working alone.i.e on beekeeping husbandry	Beekeepers Accident or sting	<p>Not recommended to work alone. Ensure a responsible person knows how long you will be working in the apiary.</p> <p>Not allowed to work alone with power tools or ladders. Nobody who carries an EpiPen or has a known medical condition that places them at risk is permitted to be alone in the apiary.</p> <p>Ensure lone-worker has means of emergency communication and that there is a mobile signal.</p> <p>Visitors informed of lone-working policy</p>
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High risk, low impact

<p>Misuse of chemicals (bee disease treatments if used), masonry paint etc.</p> <p>Use of chemicals (bee disease treatments)</p>	Beekeepers	<p>Chemicals to be stored securely as per COSHH guidance.</p> <p>Instructions to be followed as per data sheet and label.</p> <p>PPE to be worn when using chemicals – gloves, mask, goggles.</p> <p>Disposal of used chemicals and treatments to be done so safely and as per instructions</p> <p>All chemical to be washed off from skin if contact is made.</p>
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High risk, medium impact

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Risk	Who or what affected?	Mitigation
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<p>Cleaning and maintaining equipment.</p> <p>Using blow-torches or similar equipment.</p> <p>Using sharp tools.</p> <p>Using chemicals (ie wood stain / protector).</p>	<p>Persons involved in activity.</p>	<p>Full briefing delivered before commencing activity.</p> <p>Equipment must be safety tested and properly maintained.</p> <p>Only responsible adult(s) to use blow-torches or similar equipment.</p> <p>Children cleaning, maintaining or building equipment must be fully briefed before activity commences. Consider using protective gloves and safety equipment.</p> <p>Ensure children cleaning equipment with hive tools or similar objects use them safely in accordance with safety briefing.</p> <p>Use chemicals in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.</p>
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<p>Wax melting, candle or soap making. Risk of injury, burns and scolding</p> <p>Risk of fire</p>	<p>Those involved in activity</p>	<p>Briefing to be delivered before commencement. All activity to be supervised.</p> <p>All those involved must wear safety glasses and aprons. Consider gloves.</p> <p>Only appropriate equipment to be used and in accordance with instructions.</p> <p>Ensure wax does not reach its flashpoint (254C). Beeswax melts safely at 150C. Ensure appropriate fire extinguishers are to hand (type yellow or blue, similar to cooking fat fires); ensure everyone is appropriately briefed and first aid is available. Ensure emergency services can be quickly contacted.</p>
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High risk, medium impact

<p>Risk of fire, lighting and using smoker</p>	<p>Beekeepers, property and others</p>	<p>Exercise care when using a lighted smoker particularly during long dry spells. Place smoker on a hard level</p>
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Lighting the Smoker		<p>surface when not in use. Ensure smoker is properly extinguished and emptied safely after use.</p> <p>Ensure water for use in an emergency is available on site</p> <p>Children to be briefed before starting beekeeping activities.</p> <p>Children to be supervised at all times when lighting and using a smoker</p> <p>First aid equipment/treatment available on site</p>
Risk of burns or smoke inhalation		
High risk, high impact		
Risk of burns or fire from blow-torch during hive maintenance.	Beekeeper	<p>Children permitted only to watch from a safe distance the cleaning of equipment with a blowtorch.</p> <p>Safety equipment to be worn by beekeeper. Great care to be taken. No lone working and emergency assistance readily available.</p>