

Proposal for Safe Honey Beekeeping, Annotated

17A.020.020 Definitions

Bee. Means any stage of development of the common domestic honey bee, *Apis mellifera* species.

Specifies that no other type of bee may be kept in the City of Spokane other than domestic bees bred for gentleness and honey production.

Beekeeper. Means a person owning, possessing or controlling one or more colonies of bees.

Allows a beekeeper to maintain a hive on the property of another and allows for more clarity regarding a beekeeper's responsibilities.

Colony. Means a hive and its equipment and appurtenances, including one queen, bees, comb, honey, pollen and brood.

Hive. Means any Langstroth type structure with movable-frames intended for the housing of a bee colony. A hive typically consists of a cover, honey supers, brood chambers and a bottom board.

In 1851, Lorenzo **Langstroth** conceived of housing bees by using frames spaced apart from each other in a box, so that the bees would not build honeycomb across the frames or attached to the box. Beekeepers around the world have used this structure to maintain bees for over 150 years.

Moveable frames are the basic components of the hive. Each one is composed of a wooden or plastic frame that supports a sheet of comb foundation. After the worker bees have added wax to draw out the foundation, they use the wax cells for honey and pollen storage and brood rearing.

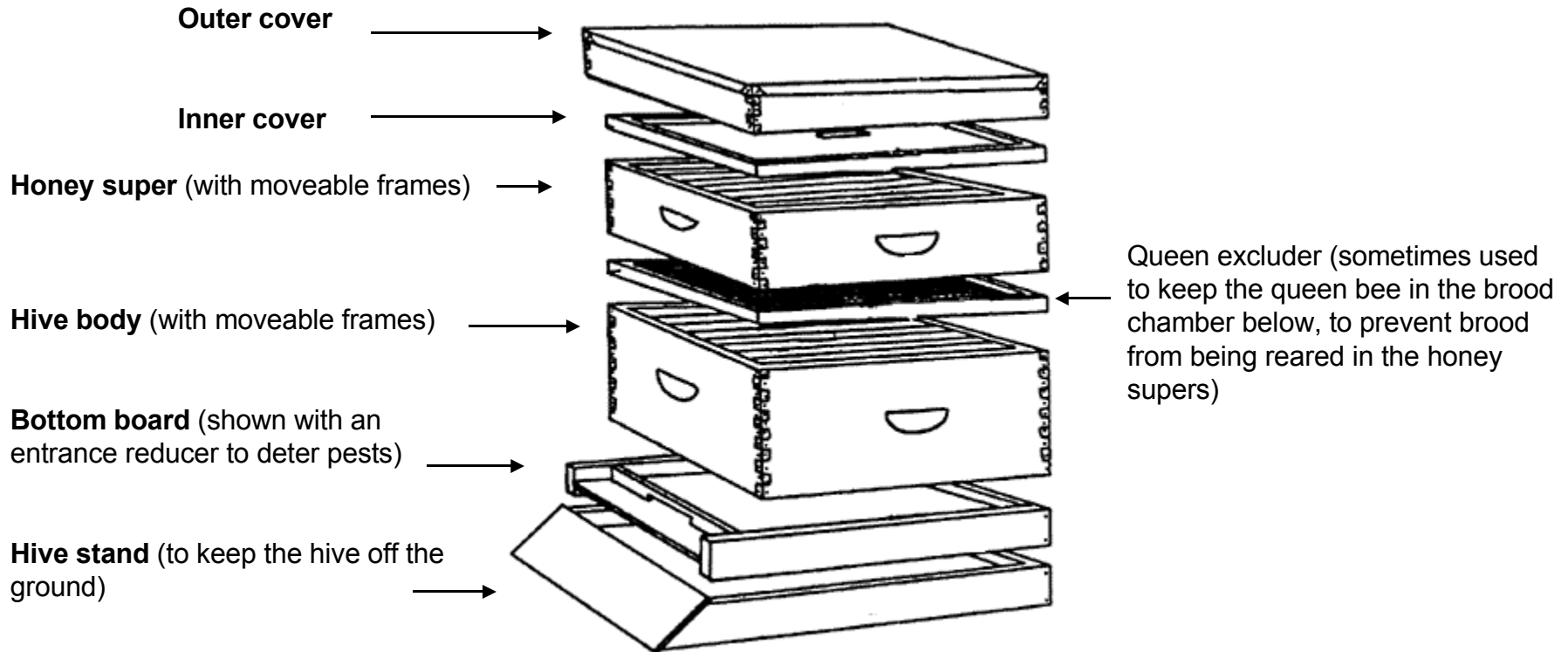
Covers (often an inner cover is used to make the outer cover easier to remove), protect the hive and restrict the bee's access to the hive through the narrow slot between the brood chamber and the bottom board.

Honey supers are boxes with moveable frames placed on top of a brood chamber where bees store their extra honey. One hive may fill up to four honey supers.

A **brood chamber**, or hive body, is a box typically housing ten frames. They are available in 4 heights but the full-depth one, 9 5/8 inches high, is most common. One hive may occupy two brood chambers.

A **bottom board** forms the floor to the hive. The front end of the bottom board shapes the entrance to the hive and serves as a take off and landing area for the bees.

Components of a Langstroth Type Hive Structure



17C.310.130 Beekeeping

A. Where permitted. Beekeeping is allowed as an accessory use on lot occupied by a single-family residence that is in the RA, RSF, RTF, RMF and RHD zones. Beekeeping for educational or research purposes by an institution such as a college, high school or agricultural extension office is allowed as a Type II conditional use permit in all other zones, subject to the requirements of section 17C.310.130(B)(1) through (6).

→ Allows safe beekeeping on all residential lots used for single family purposes, preventing bees from being kept on lots housing multiple families.

→ Authorizes beekeeping for educational purposes within the city with a permit.

B. Standards Applicable to Beekeeping. Beekeeping is subject to the following standards:

1. Location, Density and Maintenance of Colonies.

a. The number of colonies is limited to one colony per 4,350 square feet of lot area, up to a maximum of eight colonies regardless of lot size, and

→ Keeps the same density as the current ordinance, but caps the maximum number of colonies at a lower number.

b. Colonies shall be setback a minimum of 25 feet of any property line, except that a colony may be situated within 10 feet of a side lot line or rear lot line provided the following provisions are met:

i. The beehives are isolated from public access by a security fence as required under 17C.110.230(F); and

ii. The beekeeper establishes and maintains a flyway barrier at least 6 feet in height consisting of a solid wall, solid fencing material, dense vegetation or combination thereof that is parallel to the property line and extends ten feet beyond the colony in each direction so that all bees are forced to fly at an elevation of at least 6 feet above ground level over the property lines in the vicinity of the colony; or

Allows a hive to be located within 10 feet of a neighboring lot line as long as the yard is fenced and a wall-type barrier is erected that requires bees to fly at an elevation of at least 6 feet when crossing to the nearest neighboring property. (Please see photos on the next page.) This is consistent with other municipal bee regulations.

iii. The colony is situated ten feet or more above the grade of the nearest adjoining property line.

→ Alternatively, a hive may be located within 10 feet of a neighboring lot line if the yard is fenced and the hive is elevated, on a flat rooftop, for example.



Honey bee hives situated in front of a flyway barrier.

Side view of the same beehives in front of the flyway barrier. The entrance to the hive is facing the barrier, forcing the honey bees to fly overhead before they leave the yard.



B. Standards Applicable to Beekeeping, cont.

2. Colonies shall be maintained in movable-frame hives with adequate space and management techniques to prevent overcrowding and swarming.

Swarming occurs when a number of eggs develop into adults at the same time and do not have adequate space in the hive. Ensuring sufficient hive space can help to prevent swarming. Checking colonies every 2 weeks during the spring, and removing any swarm queen cells can also help to prevent swarms.

3. In any instance in which a colony exhibits aggressive or swarming behavior, the beekeeper must ensure that the colony is re-queened. Aggressive behavior is any instance in which unusual aggressive characteristics such as stinging or attacking without provocation occurs.

Each colony has only one queen. Queens are bred to lay eggs that produce bees with particular characteristics. A queen producing a colony that is aggressive or prone to swarming can easily be replaced to change the characteristics of the colony.

4. Every beekeeper shall maintain an adequate supply of water for the bees located close to each hive.

Bees need water in warm weather to cool their hives and dilute honey. To keep honey bees from searching for water at a neighbor's pool or birdbath, the beekeeper must provide water.



B. Standards Applicable to Beekeeping, cont.

5. Registrations and Training.

a. All colonies shall be registered with the Director of the State Department of Agriculture pursuant to RCW 15.60.021 prior to April 1st of each year. →

b. The beekeeper shall have completed the requirements for apprenticeship level of the Washington State Beekeeper's Association master beekeeper certification program.

The Department of Agriculture promotes safe beekeeping practices and uses registration fees to improve commercial and noncommercial beekeeping. Section 15.60.021 of the RCW provides that:

- (1) Each person owning one or more hives with bees, brokers renting hives, and apiarists resident in other states who operate hives in Washington shall register with the director by April 1st each year.
- (2) The registration application shall include:
 - (a) The name, address, and phone number of the apiarist or broker;
 - (b) The number of colonies of bees to be owned, brokered, or operated in Washington that year;
 - (c) A registration fee as prescribed in rule by the director, with the advice of the apiaary advisory committee; and
 - (d) Any other information required by the department by rule.
- (3) The director shall issue to each apiarist or broker registered with the department an apiarist identification number.

↙

The WSBA is a nonprofit group, organized among other purposes, to increase the knowledge of beekeepers about honey bees.

The apprentice level of the master beekeeper certification program requires beekeepers to have a minimum of beekeeping knowledge and experience. Ten lessons are provided each applicant to the program and the student is tested from the lesson material. The student has the opportunity to take an open book exam following the instruction or they may elect to take the exam without the instruction. The WSBA issues a certificate to a beekeeper who has completed the apprenticeship level requirements. The Inland Empire Beekeepers Association and the WSU/Spokane County Extension coordinate to administer a 10-lesson Basic Beekeeping Class each year for up to 50 students.

