

Health and Safety Risk Assessment by the Somerton Division of the Somerset Beekeepers Association for those Apiary Meetings with particular reference to those where Non Beekeepers and Novice Beekeepers may attend.

There are often members of the public, who are interested in beekeeping, and are considering taking up the hobby. This Risk Assessment considers those issues that these inexperienced individuals attending Divisional Apiary Meetings raise; it. This Risk Assessment should be read in conjunction with the British Beekeeper Advisory Leaflets Number B6 "Organising an Apiary Meeting" and leaflet B2 ""Bee Stings"

It is essential that one of the senior beekeepers, who will be attending the Meeting, is nominated as in charge. It will be his responsibility to check in advance that the apiary site is suitable for "spectators" and that the temperament of the bees is suitable. It will be necessary to check that they are able to give precise verbal directions to the site if an accident should occur. In a distant out apiary this could include a six-figure map reference. It would also be necessary to check where the nearest telephone was available, and if mobile phone reception was adequate. The Landowners specific permission should be sought. Before the spectators begin to approach the hive site it will be necessary to give a short briefing talk to explain what will be happening during the session. This should include the following elements.

1. Identify anyone attending who has a medical problem that could become a problem, whether they have their medication with them, and whether they are able to self administer the medication or have someone with them who can. If the Beekeeper in Charge is not satisfied that their preparations are satisfactory then he should explain that regretfully he couldn't cannot allow them to participate.
2. Bees are often upset by strong odours such as perfume, hair spray, aftershave etc. Spectators wearing some might want to withdraw.
3. Identify the protective clothing that needs to be supplied to those attending. The Division has a supply of appropriate veils, gloves etc. that are available.
4. Once the protective clothing has been put on it will be necessary for the Beekeeper in Charge to see that all spectators are checked for being "bee tight".
5. Explain what will happen when opening hives and behaviour that is to be avoided such as standing in the bees' flight path.
6. Should the weather be unsuitable for opening the hives then the Beekeeper in Charge should cancel the Apiary Meeting.
7. It is important that spectators must be aware that they must follow the instructions of the Beekeeper in Charge throughout the whole of the Apiary Meeting.
8. Explain that at the end of the Meeting that all protective clothing should continue to be worn until well clear of the apiary site, and the Beekeeper in Charge gives the instruction to remove it.

CHECK LIST.

Preparation

1. Plan and organise the Meeting carefully.
2. Determine who will be running the Meeting- One person only.
3. List all essential equipment and who will provide it.
4. Identify what protective clothing is needed and arrange for it to be available.
5. Make sure that the Landowner knows of your plans.
6. Make sure that any neighbours who could be affected are aware of the Meeting.
7. Have a mobile phone to hand and know the exact location of the apiary and the nearest public phone.
8. Identify whether any of the attendees have a known allergy to bee venom.
9. The BBKA advises all organisers to do a written risk assessment of the event, identifying hazards and the steps taken to minimise them and their outcomes. Somerton Divisional apiary visits will use the prepared risk assessment, augmented by any additional local factors that require documentation. Organisers of other apiary visits are advised to follow the same course of action.

At the Meeting.

1. Make sure that all those attending are appropriately dressed.
2. Identify any individuals who have relevant medical conditions and whether they have appropriate medication with them and that it can be administered.
3. If any of the circumstances are not right cancel the Meeting.
4. Explain what will be happening, and the basic behaviour by spectators that is appropriate i.e make sure that people do not stand in the flight path of the bees.
5. Watch that the apiary is not over congested.
6. Do not administer any medical treatment unless you are qualified to do so.
7. Put all brace comb etc in a container and remove from the site.