



East Dorset Beekeeping Association (EDBKA) Health & Safety Policy

Introduction: Beekeeping Health & Safety in Dorset

The East Dorset Beekeeping Association (EDBKA), based at West Moors, is a volunteer-led organisation run entirely by members who give their time and experience to promote safe and responsible beekeeping.

The Management Committee is committed to ensuring that all activities, from training courses to apiary visits, are safe and well-managed. We recognise our duty of care to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all volunteers, members, and visitors, and to minimise risks wherever possible.

A designated Health & Safety Officer (HSO) is appointed to oversee this policy. However, every member shares responsibility for maintaining safe practices and preventing harm to themselves and others.

This policy covers all EDBKA-run events, the teaching apiary, and training sessions. Independent beekeeping activities by members in their own apiaries, or honey sales outside EDBKA, are not included.

Managing Risk at Apiary Sessions and Events

All EDBKA events are supervised by a representative responsible for health and safety on behalf of the association. Their responsibilities include:

- Completing risk assessments for new locations or activities.
- Providing advance instructions on protective clothing (bee suits, gloves, sturdy footwear).
- Informing attendees of the risks of bee stings, allergic reactions, and potential anaphylaxis.
- Ensuring attendees carrying prescribed auto-injectors know their responsibilities and advise supervisors of their location.
- Refusing entry to the apiary for anyone without appropriate protective clothing.

- Checking all apiary equipment is safe and well maintained.
- Giving a clear safety briefing before handling bees.
- Establishing and communicating emergency procedures.

Reducing Risk Through Safe Beekeeping Practices

EDBKA is committed to anticipating, identifying, and eliminating hazards wherever possible. To support this, we:

- Provide **education and training in safe beekeeping practices** for beginners and refresher training for experienced members.
- Demonstrate correct handling of bees, equipment, and smokers at the teaching apiary.
- Supervise sessions with experienced and qualified beekeepers.
- Carry out risk assessments for events involving members of the public.
- Ensure honey extraction, storage, and bottling follow food safety regulations.
- Adhere to safeguarding requirements for children and vulnerable adults (see EDBKA Safeguarding Policy).

Common Apiary Risks We Manage

- Bee stings (including anaphylaxis).
- Manual handling of heavy hive equipment.
- Fire hazards from smokers or gas torches.
- Safe use, storage, and disposal of hive treatments (oxalic acid etc.).
- Hive inspections in public spaces (e.g. swarm collection).
- Working at height or alone in the apiary.
- Travel and safe transport of live bees.
- Apiary siting and safe access.
- Health conditions or disabilities that may increase risk.
- Hygiene when extracting and processing honey.
- Presence of drugs, alcohol, or contagious illness at events.
- Storage and use of gas bottles for sterilisation or heating.

Apiary Induction for Safe Beekeeping in Dorset

All members working in the association apiary must attend an induction session covering:

- Correct use of protective equipment.
- Safe lifting techniques for brood boxes and supers.
- Lighting, using, and extinguishing a smoker safely.
- Safe flaming of equipment with a gas torch.
- First aid treatment for stings and emergency procedures for anaphylaxis.
- Safe handling and use of hive treatments and chemicals.

Health & Safety Information in the Apiary

Key information is displayed clearly at the EDBKA teaching apiary, including:

- Directions to the nearest hospital and emergency services.
- Contact details for emergencies.
- The exact location of the apiary, including a What3Words identifier for emergency response.
- Introduction of a QR code for all arrivals to log in.

Continuous Improvement in Apiary Risk Management

EDBKA understands that **health and safety in beekeeping** are ongoing responsibilities. We therefore:

- Review this policy annually and after any significant incident.
- Seek feedback from members to improve health and safety practices.
- Encourage a culture of openness where safety concerns are raised and addressed quickly.

Conclusion: Our Commitment to Safe Beekeeping

Beekeeping is a rewarding activity, but it carries natural risks. At East Dorset Beekeeping Association, we are committed to minimising those risks through education, preparation, and shared responsibility.

By working together, we ensure that our passion for bees is matched by our commitment to the **health, safety, and wellbeing** of everyone involved.

Health & Safety Officer (HSO) : *S E Palmer*