



**COMMISSIONER'S BULLETIN
INSPECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
CITY OF BOSTON**

Number: 2024-05
Date: December 4, 2024

Subject: Establishment of Application Requirements, Administrative Procedures and Administrative Regulations regarding the Licensing of Keeping of Honey Bees pursuant to City of Boston Code, Ordinances Chapter 16-1.27

Purpose: This bulletin is issued to establish application requirements, administrative procedures and administrative regulations regarding the licensing of honey bee keeping operations.

Determination:

Pursuant to City of Boston Code, ordinances, Chapter 16-1.27, the Inspectional Services Department promulgates these rules and regulations regarding the registration of beekeeping operations in the City of Boston. All properties seeking to keep honey bees shall be subject to the following requirements.

A. Definitions

- I. For the purposes of this Bulletin, definitions shall be consistent with definitions described in City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter 16-1.27(b), in addition to the following definitions:
 - A. *Ground level beekeeping operation* - shall mean any beekeeping operation on the ground level of a property, including in or on a front yard, side yard, or rear yard or a property accessible from the property level equal to the street/sidewalk abutting the property.
 - B. *Rooftop beekeeping operation* - shall mean any beekeeping operation on a rooftop or other structure.
- II. Beekeeping operations are not allowed on decks or porches other than at ground level or rooftop.

B. Procedure for Registering a Beekeeping Operation

All beekeeping operations shall abide by the following protocol:

I. Confirm whether a building permit is required:

- *Ground level beekeeping operations* - no additional building permit required. Ground level beekeeping operations shall proceed directly to the Inspectional Services Department Health Division to fill out a registration form, pursuant to section II of this Bulletin.
- *Rooftop beekeeping operations* - shall require one of the following:
 - **For pre-existing, permitted roof decks** - a short form building permit is required to add beehives to a pre-existing, permitted roof deck. The application should include an assessment of load (weight) capacity by a professional engineer to certify that the additional weight of the beehives will not compromise the pre-existing structure
 - **For new roof decks, or beekeeping operations to be added to a roof not otherwise permitted for occupancy** - a long form building permit is required to establish the appropriate methods of rooftop access, safety systems, and occupant load
 - All rooftop beekeeping operations shall be subject to Commissioner's Bulletin CB2022-02 - *Regulating Access to Roof Areas of Buildings with Residential Units*

II. Beekeeping Registration Form:

Complete a Beekeeping Registration form with ISD's Health Division ("Application for Permit to Keep Honey Bees")

- Application requires the following documents:
 - A completed registration form
 - A sketch of the proposed hives:
 - Sketch may be hand drawn to scale showing all applicable setbacks outlined in CBC 16-1.27(D)
 - Sketch must include all dimensions in height and cubic feet in size, and include notation of all walls, fences and/or barriers between the subject property and adjacent properties, including setbacks from property lines.
 - Registration form must include the address of nearest adjacent abutters
 - Registration form must indicate whether the beekeeping operation is located on a roof/structure, and if so, must include the permit issued by the Inspectional Services Department Building Division indicating approval of said beekeeping operation on a rooftop structure for the subject property
 - Registration form must describe the flyway that will be in place for the beekeeping operation

- Sketches do not need to be stamped by a Massachusetts Registered Design Professional
- Submit application and sketch to ISD's Health Division via email to ISDHealth@boston.gov, or in person on the 4th Floor of 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118

III. Beekeeping Registration; Payment of Fees:

- The fee for all beekeeping registrations shall be \$25.00

IV. Inspection Requirements and Procedures:

The Inspectional Services Department may inspect any beekeeping operation, either prior to approval or upon request via a complaint submitted to the Department, and may enforce any violations of regulations pursuant to the authority of City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter 16-1.27, including through the issuance of a written warning for compliance, cancellation of registration, and/or proceeding to restrain a violation of the terms of a permit through injunction.

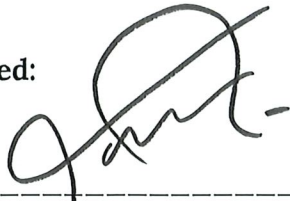
C. Other Requirements

Compliance with Other Laws and Regulations - Beekeeping Operations situated on rooftops must comply with City of Boston Code, Ordinances Section 9-9.13, *Regulating Access to Roof Areas of Buildings with Residential Units* and Commissioner's Bulletin CB2022-01, *Regulating Access to Roof Areas of Buildings with Residential Units*.

D. Violations and Penalties

Any person found to be operating a Bee Keeping Operation in violation of Section 16-1.27 of the City of Boston Code or found to be in violation of the terms of their registration may be issued a written warning and/or revocation of the registration. Provided that the City of Boston may proceed to restrain a violation of the terms of the registration by injunction.


Signed:



Tania Del Rio, Commissioner
Inspectional Services Department

12/4/2024

Date



Daniel Prendergast, Assistant Commissioner
Health Division
Inspectional Services Department

12/4/2024

Date