



## Community & Economic Development Department

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### Memorandum

Date: July 21, 2021  
To: Blair Larsen, Community & Economic Development Director  
From: Ethan Rowe, Code Compliance Officer  
Re: Bees and Beekeeping

As requested, I have researched local city codes pertaining to gathering honeybees in a residential area. My findings are as follows:

1. Albany: No specific ordinance pertaining to honeybees. After speaking with Chris, the Code Enforcement officer, he told me they do not get very many calls pertaining to honeybees. Consequently, Albany Council and Staff have not discussed any ordinance on the matter.
2. Corvallis: I spoke with Carol Gordon, the Code Enforcement Officer. Carol told me they do not have any code provisions that deal with honeybees either.
3. Brownsville: Most of their animal codes, including Bees, require approval from the City Administrator, however they have no posted requirements, nor have they had any incidents requiring action.
4. Lebanon: Lebanon requires a formal permitting process established by the city, provided there is no objection by a person residing within one hundred feet of the premises where the bees are being kept.
5. Lake Elsinore, California: Not more than two bee colonies or beehives, with no more than two "supers" or honey-collecting cells per colony, shall be permitted provided the following conditions be met:

A hive or colony shall maintain a minimum distance of 50 feet from any neighboring property; and Such hives or colonies shall be the property of, or maintained by, the resident/owner of the property upon which the hives or colonies are located; and an adequate water supply shall be provided on site at all times; and all hives or colonies are to be registered with the County Agricultural Commissioner.

In my almost nine months of being the Code Compliance Officer, I have received two complaints about bee collection. Neither of these complaints have resulted from stings or aggressive bees and appear to have been made simply because of the presence of beehives within city limits.

Here are some additional facts I have found pertaining to honeybees:

A honeybee that is away from the hive foraging for nectar or pollen will rarely sting, except when stepped on or roughly handled. Honeybees will actively seek out and sting when they perceive the hive to be threatened, often being alerted to this by the release of attack pheromones.

The sting's injection of apitoxin into the victim is accompanied by the release of alarm pheromones, a process which is accelerated if the bee is fatally injured. The release of alarm pheromones near a hive may attract other bees to the location, where they will likewise exhibit defensive behaviors until there is no longer a threat, typically because the victim has either fled or been killed. (Note: A bee swarm, seen as a mass of bees flying or clumped together, is generally not hostile; it has deserted its hive and has no comb or young to defend.)

These pheromones do not dissipate or wash off quickly, and if their target enters water, bees will resume their attack as soon as it leaves the water. The alarm pheromone emitted when a bee stings another animal smells like a banana.

Drone bees, the males, are larger and do not have stingers. The female bees (worker bees and queens) are the only ones that can sting, and their stinger is a modified ovipositor (for laying eggs). The queen bee has a barbed but smoother stinger and can, if need be, sting skin-bearing creatures multiple times, but the queen does not leave the hive under normal conditions. Her sting is not for defense of the hive; she only uses it for dispatching rival queens, ideally before they can emerge from their cells. Queen breeders who handle multiple queens and have the queen odor on their hands are sometimes stung by a queen.