

Town of Brookline Requirements For the Keeping of Animals and Bee's

Town of Brookline Public Health Department and Building Department (zoning regulations) have regulations and standards for the Keeping of Animals and Bee's in the town. These standards are designed to address Health, Safety and adopted Community Standard in the community. Applications in residential areas of the town have specific concerns.

- Applications are obtained from the Public Health Department
 - Applications requires sign off from Building Department (form provided by Health Department)
 - Application includes Plot Plan (to scale)
 - Pest Management Plan
 - Manure Management Plan
 - Emergency Disaster Plan
 - Building Department Approval
 - Zoning Board Approval (if applicable)
 - Abutter Notifications – for Public Hearing (completed by Health Department)
 - Any Additional Requirements for Specific Species (Poultry, Bees, Pigeons, Horses, Swine etc)
 - Permit Application Fee (fee rate pending)
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Examples of conditions established for permit issuance:

Chickens:

- Limit of 12 chickens. (no roosters).
- An enclosed pod and pen for chickens must be constructed as outlined in submitted plans. Panned area may be chicken wire. The Panned area must be covered over the top. Chickens will be restricted to the pod and enclosed pen at all times.
- Feeding of birds shall occur only in the pod and pen. Manure must be cleaned up regularly and composted in an approved composting environment or otherwise disposed of in a sanitary manner. If disposed of offsite department must approve of location.
- Maintain good hygiene practices after contact with chickens.
- Report sick chickens to Brookline Health Department (617-730-2300) and Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture Division of Animal Health (617-626-1792) immediately. Report any animal attacks on chickens to Brookline Health Department.
- The pest control management plan must be submitted as a permit condition.
- As part of the Keeping of Animals permit the Health Department will perform routine, unannounced inspections to ensure compliance with these permit conditions.

Bees:

- The beehive structure must comply with all applicable zoning bylaw requirements.
- Parcel is limited to 2 beehives. Bees must be maintained in moveable-frame hives situated at least 4 inches off the ground to allow ventilation, limit pests, and reduce bottom entrance obstructions. The entrance of the beehive must be oriented to face the opposite direction of the nearest abutting property.
- Only non-aggressive honeybee (*Apis Mellifera*) species are permitted.
- A constant and adequate water source must be provided on site at all times. The water source should be drained and refilled periodically to prevent mosquito larvae growth and nuisance conditions.
- In the event of nuisance complaints regarding low flight paths of bees through abutting properties, the property owner is advised to install a reasonable physical structure to influence the bees to take a higher flight path as they enter and exit the beehives.
- Hives must be registered with Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. Beekeeping operations must comply with all applicable regulations, inspections, and permitting standards as required by state law.
- The primary beekeeper must demonstrate to the Director of Public Health completion of a beekeeper training course with the Norfolk County Beekeeping Association or another training resource approved by the Director. Membership and active participation with the Norfolk County Beekeeping Association is recommended.
- If the property owner also serves as the primary beekeeper, an equally qualified beekeeper must be designated to maintain hive operations and respond to all nuisance complaints and other emergencies during any periods of extended absence or vacation by the property owner.
- An operations and emergency plan must be submitted to the Director that describes in detail:
 - a. Physical set-up and location of hives.
 - b. Routine hive maintenance and integrated pest management (IPM) procedures.
 - c. Corrective actions to be taken under potential nuisance conditions resulting from aggressive or objectionable bee behavior.
 - d. Planned response to possible acute damage to hive and swarm suppression measures. Contact information for qualified personnel to be contacted to assist during swarming and emergency scenarios must be included.
- The Brookline Health Department may reasonably conduct unannounced inspections of beekeeping facilities to ensure compliance with the aforementioned conditions and respond to any nuisance complaints.
- Must be willing to comply with any future regulations promulgated by the town of Brookline as they relate to the keeping of bees.
- It is recommended that the applicant update their homeowner's insurance policy to cover beekeeping activities.