



# Movement of bees for pollination - action to be taken by DPI

24 July 2022

DPI and industry groups are working hard to contain and eradicate the spread of varroa mite in NSW whilst balancing the need for business continuity. The **Biosecurity Emergency Group Permit** allows registered commercial beekeepers to move hives in the General Emergency Zone (GEZ) of NSW, while the standstill on the movement of honeybees and hives remains in place as per the current **Biosecurity (Varroa Mite) Emergency Order 2022 (No. 14)**.

Registered commercial beekeepers should submit a [Hive Movement Declaration](#) prior to moving their honeybees and hives in the GEZ of the State. Once the hives are in their new locations, NSW DPI Officers may undertake surveillance.

## Pollination surveillance

### *Registration and permits*

The [Biosecurity Emergency Group Permit](#) authorises the movement of bees and hives which otherwise would not be permitted under the current **Biosecurity (Varroa Mite) Emergency Order 2022 (No. 14)**, or any emergency order that replaces this order.

A registered commercial beekeeper may, under *section 379 of the Biosecurity Act 2015*, apply for a permit to move their hives for pollination activities.

You may apply for this emergency permit by first, completing the [Tocal Varroa mite online training](#), then undertaking the alcohol washing requirements. You will then be required to provide details of the proposed movement of your hives to the Department by completing the notification of proposed hive movement form at [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/varroa](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/varroa) or <https://forms.bfs.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forms/12344>

### *Alcohol washing*

The required number of hives to sample from your overall number of hives is prescribed in the Emergency Group Permit as follows:

- (a) less than 64 hives – alcohol washing of all hives
- (b) 64 hives and up to 640 hives – alcohol washing of 64 hives, or
- (c) 640 hives or greater – alcohol washing of 10% of hives.

## Use of miticide strips and sticky mats

The alcohol wash prior to movement does not achieve the necessary confidence from a single wash. Therefore, NSW DPI will be undertaking targeted surveillance on 20 hives per apiary. This will provide a sufficient sample size to detect varroa if present. Apart from selected miticide and sticky board sampling being undertaken by DPI Officers at pollination sites, compliance checks will also be undertaken to ensure that requirements of the permit have been followed for beekeepers and growers.

Authorised Officers will place up to four Bayvarol miticide strips in a brood box with a sticky board placed on the bottom board and left in place for a maximum of six days (generally three days) as per the APVMA permit. These mats and strips must not be tampered with or removed during the surveillance period.

## Minimal disruption to hives

To ensure minimal disturbance to the bees, and minimal disruption to the pollination activities, sampling strips and mats will be added to the hives around midday (10am – 3pm), and only when the density of flowering reaches approximately 50% bloom of the orchard.

Wet weather may also prevent strips and board being inserted as the bees will not be actively flying and sourcing food and there is an increased risk of damaging the brood. Therefore, if the weather conditions are not favourable to safe operations, the NSW DPI Officer may return later.

## What if a positive detection is found?

If a positive detection is found during the NSW DPI surveillance of your hives, the DPI response team will work with the hive owner to determine how the bees are euthanised and what happens to the hive and frames in terms of disposal.

Check the latest update on the NSW DPI website and use the online map to determine whether you are in a biosecurity zone.

All beekeepers within the eradication, surveillance and notification zones need to report your hive online by completing the [Beekeeper Notifications - Varroa mite](#) online form.

If you detect Varroa mite, call the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline to report your detection on 1800 084 881** (9am to 5pm, 7 days a week).

## Your wellbeing

There are free and confidential support services available to all beekeepers during this difficult

time and we encourage beekeepers to access small business and mental health and wellbeing support early.

Small business support is available to beekeepers through

- Rural Financial Counselling Service on 1800 344 090 and
- Small Biz Connect on 1300 134 359

**The Varroa mite emergency response may impact people's mental and emotional wellbeing.**

Please see contacts below that you can use for the wellbeing of yourself and others affected by this emergency.

Beyondblue – [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

- Beyondblue offers online counselling, support and referrals. The website provides information relating to depression and anxiety disorders, as well as options for treatment, recovery and staying well.
- Phone: 1300 22 46 36

Lifeline – [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

- Lifeline provides compassionate support for people in crisis. No judgement. No conditions. No agenda. Just a human connection. Confidential crisis support is available via phone, text or online chat.
- Phone: 13 11 14
- Lifeline Text: 0447 13 11 14
- Lifeline online chat: [www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat/](http://www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat/)

