



Date: Tuesday, October 17, 2023
To: Honorable Mayor Richardson and Members of the City Council
From: Daryl Supernaw, Councilmember, Fourth District
Subject: **Notification of Beehive/Colony Sightings**

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to request City Manager work with the Department of Health & Human Services and any other relevant departments to implement within 30 days a live-time notification system to Council Offices regarding beehive/colony sightings reported to the Environmental Health Bureau.

DISCUSSION:

The Bureau of Environmental Health under the Department of Health & Human Services is responsible for responding to reports of beehives/colonies in Long Beach. According to the bureau's website, if a colony/hive is found and someone is stung, the public is to dial 911. To report bee swarms or hives, residents are to call the bureau's office. If the sighting is on private property, the bureau then provides residents (via e-mail) information on private beekeepers that can assist in removing the bees. When bees are reported on public property, the bureau's vector control program works with approved vendors to remove the bees and/or hive.

The city's website acknowledges bees can pursue people for a ¼ mile (or more), they can sense a threat from people or animals at a 50-foot distance (or more) of a hive and can sense vibration from power equipment (100 feet or more). When feeling threatened, bees can attack rapidly and in large numbers. Depending on a person's medical history, a bee sting can become a life-or-death medical emergency.

As a general precaution and to promote public safety, Council Office notification of these sightings seems prudent and consistent with other alerts already provided to Council Offices (WCLs, City Manager Alerts, Notification of Construction Work, Film Notices). Council Offices have the ability to assist the City in making the public aware of areas to avoid or approach with caution. The notification system requested should not exacerbate the workload city employees already have as the system can be as simple as an e-mail to the Council Office's general inbox or a CC when providing residents information on private beekeepers or next steps when dealing with bees.

This matter has been reviewed by Budget Analyst Joe R. Guerrero on October 9, 2023.



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FISCAL IMPACT:

This recommendation requests the City Manager work with the Department of Health and Human Services and any other relevant departments to implement within 30 days a live-time notification system to Council Offices regarding beehive/colony sightings reported to the Environmental Health Bureau. The requested action is anticipated to have a significant impact on staff hours beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is expected to have moderate impact on existing City Council priorities, as the prioritization of this effort will likely impact or delay other current projects and initiatives. The cost for a live-time notification system and funding sources are currently unknown. Funding will need to be identified for a potential system and costs have been finalized, staff may return to the City Council for funding identification or appropriation approval.



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Bees

BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

VECTOR CONTROL PROGRAM: BEES

Africanized Honey Bees are closely related to European Honey Bees, which are used in agriculture for crop pollination and honey production. The two types of bees look the same and their behavior is similar in many ways. Neither is likely to sting when gathering nectar and pollen from flowers, but both will sting in defense if provoked and have the same venom. A swarm of bees in flight or at rest sometimes concerns people, but this demonstrates their least defensive stage. Africanized Honey Bees are more likely to defend a greater area around their hive, and respond faster and in greater numbers.

AFRICANIZED HONEY BEES:

- May pursue a person 1/4 mile or more
- Swarm frequently to establish new hives
- Nest in small cavities and sheltered areas such as trees, empty containers, under roofs, in trash cans, and in utility boxes.
- Can sense a threat from people or animals 50 feet or more from the hive
- Sense vibration from power equipment 100 feet or more from the hive

POTENTIAL BEE NESTING SITES:

- Abandoned Vehicles
- Piles of rocks
- Sheds
- Tree hollows
- Attics
- Porches
- Trash cans
- Utility boxes

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

- Teach children to be cautious and respectful of all bees
- Stay away from all honey bee swarms and colonies
- Be alert when participating in outdoor activities
- Listen for buzzing sounds indicating a nest or swarm of bees nearby
- Examine work area before using lawn mowers, weed cutters, and other power equipment
- Check for honey bee swarms before tying up pets outdoors
- If bees are encountered, get away as quickly as possible to the sheltered area of a building or car.
- Protect face and eyes while running away
- Do not swat at bees or try to hide in bushes or water

WHAT TO DO IF I FIND A COLONY?

- Call the Fire Department at 911 if you find a colony/hive and have been stung in Long Beach. Call the Bureau of Environmental Health (562) 570-4132 to report bee swarms or hives in Long Beach.
- Do not try to remove the colony yourself
- Never pour water, gasoline or insecticide on bees or otherwise threaten an established honey bee colony
- Never disturb a hive or swarm
- If you find bees on your private property you can call a professional beekeeper
- If you cannot find a professional beekeeper, please call the Bureau of Environmental Health for a referral at (562) 570-4132.

WHAT TO DO IF I GET STUNG?

- Remove stinger as soon as possible
- Don't squeeze stinger; pressure will release more venom
- Scrape stinger out with fingernail, credit card or a straight-edged object
- Wash affected area with soap and water
- Apply an ice pack for a few minutes to relieve pain and swelling
- Seek medical attention if breathing is difficult, if stung numerous times or if allergic to bee sting