

# PESTICIDE INCIDENTS

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT YOU'VE BEEN AFFECTED

The process for reporting suspected pesticide-related bee losses has recently been updated. In the past, suspected pesticide incidents were reported through the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Agribusiness (OMAFRA) loss reports. This required some manual triaging and forwarding of information to the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks (MECP).

The new process is as follows:

### 1. FILE A REPORT WITH MECP

Beekeepers should report suspected pesticide incidents directly to the MECP through the Spills Action Centre by phoning 416-325-3000 or 1-800-268-6060, or by contacting their MECP district office (see sidebar at right to learn how).

### 2. MECP OFFICER RESPONSE

The MECP Environmental Compliance Officer will contact the beekeeper and determine how to respond to the incident. This may involve a site visit to collect information, which may include taking samples.

### 3. LEGAL SAMPLES MAY BE TAKEN

If a legal sample is collected by the MECP Environmental Compliance Officer, it will be transported and tested using a chain of custody to ensure that the results are valid and can be used in any follow-up action that may be required.

### 4. COLLECTING YOUR OWN SAMPLE

The responding officer may not be able to arrive on site immediately, and pesticides can break down rapidly in the environment. Beekeepers may take a sample as soon as they suspect a pesticide incident (this

sample will not be considered a legal sample, but it can be used as important information in any follow-up work for the incident). Samples can be collected in a clean glass or plastic jar and placed in the freezer. Most laboratories require about 350 bees for analysis and this sample can be provided to the responding officer during the site visit.

### 5. RESULTS FROM THE MECP

The results of the MECP testing will be returned to the beekeeper. If the testing results indicate the presence of a pesticide, then the results can be forwarded to Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) to be included in their database. This database is used when pesticides are reviewed for re-registration every five years.

### 6. MECP FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Follow-up actions by MECP may occur, depending on the results of the testing and the on-site investigations. In some cases, this can lead to charges for violations under the *Pesticide Act* if sufficient evidence is found.

### 7. SPEAK TO A LAWYER

Beekeepers may also choose to obtain legal advice to review the information and pursue a civil suit for recovery of damages.

*BEEKEEPERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO REPORT SUSPECTED PESTICIDE INCIDENTS TO ENSURE THAT GOOD BASELINE INFORMATION IS GATHERED AND TO HELP RAPIDLY DETECT ANY CONCERNING CHANGES OR TRENDS IN INCIDENT REPORTING THAT MAY WARRANT WIDER INVESTIGATION.*

## RESOURCES FOR BEEKEEPERS

Find the location of your local Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks district office using the MECP district locator at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-environment-conservation-and-parks-district-locator>

For information on Health Canada's program to assess risks to bees from pesticides, including best management practices, go to <https://www.canada.ca/pollinators>

"Practices to Reduce Bee Poisoning from Agricultural Pesticides" provides information for farmers, beekeepers, and pesticide applicators on how to reduce bee poisonings from agricultural pesticides. <https://pollinatorpartnership.ca/en/reducing-bee-poisoning>

Learn about Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) by visiting <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/consumer-product-safety/pesticides-pest-management.html>

Plant a bee-friendly garden using forage plants that provide nectar and pollen using advice and resources from the University of Guelph's Honey Bee Research Centre available at <https://hbrc.ca/plants-for-bees/>

For information and recommendations on best practices, beekeeping resources, hands-on workshops, online courses, and everything you need to keep your bees healthy, visit the OBA's Tech-Transfer Program at <https://www.ontariobee.com/outreach/ttp>