



**Pollinator Health**

BEE AWARE. BE SAFE.

## **POLLINATOR PROTECTION BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

The National Pest Management Association understands the important role that pollinators, and specifically honey bees, play in our agricultural system and the invaluable effect they have on our food supply. Unfortunately, there are significant threats facing honey bees today including parasites, disease, habitat loss, and poor nutrition. Any decrease in bee populations is likely due to multiple factors. It may not be possible to pinpoint individual factors responsible for a given case of bee population decrease. However, we have made pollinator health an industry priority and have taken several steps to protect pollinators. Along with outreach and training efforts, NPMA has developed a set of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to provide guidance for our members to minimize incidental effects on honey bees and pollinators around structures. There are multiple reasons for the development of these BMPs.

1. Pest management professionals have always been leaders in stewardship
2. There are likely to be federal/state requirements that pesticides be used in accordance with state pollinator protection plans, which are likely to reference specific industry BMPs
3. Complying with voluntary BMPs provides you and your company with an opportunity to showcase your proactive efforts

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EPA, in conjunction with state regulatory officials, is pursuing a strategy in which each state would be responsible for developing, maintaining, and administering their own pollinator protection plans. SFIREG (State FIFRA Issues Research and Evaluation Group) and AAPCO (Association of American Pest Control Officials) are taking the lead on creating a model state pollinator protection plan that states could then adopt and use as their own, likely in the summer or fall of 2015. The template pollinator protection plan will be a substantial document, but the language regarding structural pest management will only make up a small part of it. The BMPs we have developed are specific to our industry and other industries with a stake in the issue are developing their own for inclusion in the model pollinator protection plan.

BMPs are a set of recommendations comprised of advisory language that were written with the intention of encouraging practices that promote the health of managed and feral honey bees and other insect pollinators. However, NPMA understands that each environment, scenario, and application is unique and that one size does not fit all. As always, language on insecticide labels supersedes all other language. Additionally, adhering to label language has been shown to effectively reduce the likelihood of insecticides causing unintended effects and harming non-target organisms.

It is our recommendation that pest management professionals read and understand the language in the BMP document and plan to familiarize themselves with the state protection plans in areas in which they operate when they are eventually put into place.

You may have already received inquiries from your customers about honey bees and how your treatments and the products you use affect them. While structural uses of insecticides don't pose a significant risk to honey bees, understanding and incorporating BMPs into your service and treatment protocol is a great way to communicate your company's proactive philosophy and practices to your current and potential customers. NPMA currently offers online tools and training resources to our members and there are customizable marketing and consumer-facing educational materials available for download, please contact NPMA ([NPMA@PestWorld.org](mailto:NPMA@PestWorld.org)) for more details.

# POLLINATOR PROTECTION BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR STRUCTURAL PEST MANAGEMENT

1. Familiarize yourself with pollinator-attractive plants in your area<sup>‡</sup>, especially plants common around structures, and be able to determine what plants are in bloom. Remember that many plants produce small and/or cryptic flowers that are not readily apparent. Prior to application, service personnel are advised to perform an inspection of the property to locate flowering plants that are attractive to pollinators.
2. Do not make insecticide applications to the flowers or foliage of blooming plants, even weeds (unless specifically allowed by the label instructions). Careful application to other parts of the plant (trunk, stems, and roots) may be permissible if the label allows and pesticide residues will not be deposited on flowers or foliage during application.
3. Use caution while making any applications if managed hives are known to be nearby and when bees are foraging near the application site. The distance will vary and should be based on variables of the application including: weather, type of equipment, and application method. If managed hives are on the property, or adjacent to the property, communicate with your client and/or hive owner to consider moving, covering, or otherwise protecting hives prior to treatment. Check to see if your state has a registry or voluntary beehive location program to help communicate with beekeepers and locate beehives in areas in which you make treatments.
4. Be aware of environmental conditions before, during, and after treatment to keep insecticides where you intended to apply them. Account for wind conditions to prevent insecticides from drifting onto flowers when making spray or mist applications. Use low pressure, coarse spray application when possible to minimize drift. If wind conditions make spray and mist applications unwise, consider using a granular formulation if similar results can be achieved.
5. Pesticide applications may be necessary to eliminate feral bee colonies within or around structures if they pose a threat to human health or property. When reasonable, PMPs are encouraged to remove and relocate honey bee colonies or swarms from in and around structures but only if no insecticidal treatments have already been made. Identify local bee removal experts, beekeepers, or apiarists available that you can contact. To find a local listing, consult your state apiarist, department of agriculture, university extension website, or local beekeeping association.

**Note: This is document refers to structural pest management applications only.**

<sup>‡</sup> <http://pollinator.org/guides.htm#guides>



