



The British Beekeepers' Association

Bees in Buildings 2021 – v 14-4-2021

For more information about honey bee swarms please view the swarm pages on the BBKA website: <https://www.bbka.org.uk/swarm>

This document is intended as a starting point for those who find themselves with a honey bee colony which has set up home inside the fabric of a building.

It is important to identify if the bees in question are indeed honey bees. Often bumblebees set up home in the soffits and gutters of houses. Bumblebees are bigger and hairier than honeybees and can be identified by silhouette easily. These have a relatively short lifecycle and disappear by the end of May in many cases.

Beekeepers do not deal with wasps. The treatment of wasps is a specialised activity to be undertaken by someone licensed to use appropriate treatments. Wasps too have a short life cycle but this can continue into autumn.

Once wasps and bumblebees have finished their lifecycle the hole which they have used to gain access can be sealed up. There is nothing inside a bumblebee or wasp nest that remains at the end of the season to cause damage to the property.

Beekeepers are insured to remove swarms of honeybees, not colonies. Beekeepers cannot put any member of the public or themselves at risk by undertaking swarm collection in dangerous or hazardous environments.

Your building insurance might provide cover for the removal of a honeybee colony that has set up home within the fabric of your building.

You would need to ensure that the person employed is working safely and has experience of 'cut outs'. This might be an experienced pest control operative or a builder with experience of honeybees.

Ensuring the comb, honey and all the bees are removed from the property is important to ensure no damage is caused by wax or honey remaining.

Here are some companies who may be able to help with honey bee colony removals from buildings. NB these are commercial companies who will charge for the work which can be expensive. This is not a recommendation, we suggest you discuss the situation with the contractor and assure yourself that the contractor is reputable and is insured for the type of work they are proposing to undertake, agree a price for the job before commencing work and ask for references from previous customers.

British Pest Control Association(BPCA) - Pest Advice for Controlling Bees:

<https://bpca.org.uk/pest-aware/Page-2/bee-control-how-to-get-rid-of-bees-bpca-a-z-of-pests/189185>

BPCA has a useful document called We're Leaving You Bee – Why we didn't Treat your Bees:

[https://bpca.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/Pages/A-Z/Help%20documents/BPCA -
Beewise flyer 2018 WEBSITE VERSION.pdf](https://bpca.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/Pages/A-Z/Help%20documents/BPCA-_Beewise_flyer_2018_WEBSITE_VERSION.pdf)

UK Bee Removers (UKBR) on Facebook. A group of beekeepers who may be able to assist in removing bees from buildings. NB this service is not free.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/759123678164015/permalink/910744526335262> Code of Best Practice for Bee Removal.

<https://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/bees-in-buildings/>

<https://swarmcatcher.co.uk/honey-bees-in-walls/>

Oliver Kelly, BBKA member performs cutout in Herts/Beds/Cambs area:

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Destroying Nests

Whilst no one would wish to see a colony of honey bees destroyed, if they cannot be safely removed and they present a risk or disturbance to the property owner, the only option may be to have the colony destroyed by professional pest control personnel and there are many suitable private and Council agencies who can undertake that task. Bees are endangered they are not protected.

This is the link to the HSE (Health and Safety Executive) website on Honey Bees and Biocides:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/biocides/honey-bees.htm>