

Recommendations for the Georgian Beekeepers during COVID-19

The Georgian Beekeepers Union (GBU) is working remotely to provide beekeepers and government agencies with recommendations while dealing with a situation emerged due to COVID-19.

The recommendations are as follows:

- Follow all the requirements of the government. You can get detailed information in the following sources:
 - o Government hotline – 144
 - o The Ministry of Health hotline – 1505
 - o Webpage: www.stopcov.ge
 - o The Business Ombudsman Office hotline – 0322282828 regarding business related matters.
- It is recommended to suspend the beekeeping training courses and provide e-learning if possible.
- According to general recommendations, you should wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds; use soap and hot water for washing before and after your work and after any contact with people or animals.
- If you have to leave your house and move to another one, it is necessary to consider healthcare recommendations to minimize the risk of the virus spread.
- Maintain biosecurity standards in your beekeeping apiaries.
- Do not exchange beekeeping tools or protective clothes with other beekeepers.
- Disinfect beekeeping tools and supplies.
- Use gloves while working in an apiary.
- If you test positive for COVID-19 or you are having noticeable or weak symptoms, you should immediately self-isolate and do not leave your building. In this case, we recommend contacting your local beekeepers' association ([see the list here](#)), which will help beekeepers who are in self-isolation and unable to take care of their apiaries.
- A beekeeper, who will take care of an apiary of somebody who is infected, must use his own beekeeping tools and follow instructions on personal hygiene or sterilize available tools before starting working.
- Keep two meters of social distance when visiting an apiary.
- Inform the relevant authorities of any disease or pest spread.
- Reduce the possibility of swarming in apiaries to the minimum (add some empty hive boxes on the bottom and fill with the frames), as it may cause loss and create a threat to social distancing.
- *Bee transhumance*: according to the curfew limitations, any movement from 21:00 PM until 06:00 AM is restricted until the 22nd of May. Thus, the GBU facilitated issuing of special permits for beekeepers for the transhumance and movement of an apiary.
- Contact the local representatives of the *National Food Agency (NFA)* to get a special permit for the bee transhumance or movement of apiaries (more details to be found [here](#)).
- Notify the relevant agencies about your route, time required along with locations, three days in advance.
- To avoid gathering of more than three people, you should take 30-40 beehives at a time during the transhumance or any other movement of an apiary. Please consider and take care of preventing the virus for other people (in this case, supporting staff).
- Please, inform and warn members of your host family about the transhumance or movement of apiary and treat their decisions and any instructions with understanding.
- Avoid moving of beehives over long distances (maximum 150 km).
- Pay attention to pesticide treatment against *Parosana* and immediately contact the local NFA to prevent violating treatment rules;

In case of any questions or need for additional instructions, please contact us online through official [Facebook](#) or webpage www.geobeekeepers.ge.