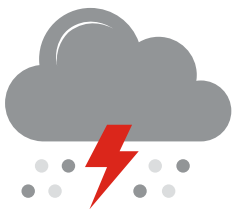


Getting to know the risks with honey processing and storage

New Zealand is justifiably proud of its honey, and our Apiary industry is well known and respected around the world. It's a vitally important industry, not just because of the role bees play in pollinating plants and crops, but also for the agricultural economy at home and overseas. Honey extraction sites come in all shapes and sizes, but they usually consist of a large shed housing honey drums and supers, and extraction equipment. Surprisingly for something so simple and pure, there are considerable production risks to keep in mind – from transportation and extraction to flammable materials and storage. Here's an overview of what to look out for.



Weather watch outs



When it comes to weather and buildings the key is "keep it out". Important buildings and valuable processing plant inside can be damaged by wild weather events which are on the increase nowadays. Here are some tips to help keep them safe.

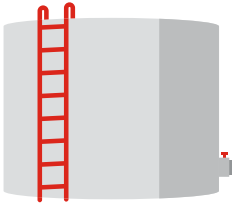
Best practice

- Keep an eye out for severe weather warnings – forewarned is forearmed.
- Identify any building weak spots such as the roof, skylights, doors, windows, cladding, canopies etc. Fix any weaknesses.
- Create an emergency plan to follow in the event of wild weather – and make sure everyone knows what to do.

Must haves

- ✓ Regularly check buildings for weak spots such as skylights, canopies, guttering/downspouts and other infrastructure to make sure of weathertightness, maintenance needs and repairs that might be required.
- ✓ Where flooding is likely move vulnerable equipment and stock to higher levels if possible. If this isn't possible, consider using barricades and sandbags to help divert water away. More permanent flood protection could be considered.
- ✓ Tie down outside plant, equipment and stock that could be affected by strong winds.

Tapping into Water Sources



If you're in a rural area it's important to consider your water sources and how easy it would be for the Fire Service to access and use them.

Best practice

- Make sure fire hydrants or fire service connections on water tanks/bore supplies are clearly marked and easy to access. If possible ensure waterways are accessible for fire fighters.
- Check that fire truck access to the site is clear. Getting to buildings might involve navigating narrow roads or around obstructions – this could be tricky if they are bringing water trucks.
- Talk to your local FENZ Fire Station Commander about a fire plan if you don't have one already. You might like to invite the local station to visit the site to help develop a plan.

Putting out the fire risk



Buildings can sometimes contain combustibles such as expanded polystyrene sandwich panelling, timber pallets, waxing processes, and plastic wrapped 'wets' – so there's always a risk of fire.

Best practice

- Install a monitored fire detection system that's fitted with smoke and heat detectors. Choose a detector unit that is suitable for the environmental conditions on your site to avoid false alarms.
- Consider fire sprinklers for large scale honey production facilities. It's a great option to help extinguish fires and limit any damage to expensive plant and stock.
- Store combustibles such as timber hive boxes and pallets well away from heat sources such as heaters, lighting, electrical switchboards and controllers.
- Ensure all staff are familiar with your sites Emergency and Evacuation Plan and know how to use the fire extinguishers you have on site.

Must haves

- ✓ Invest in the right number of fire extinguishers and place them at key locations. Consider higher risk areas such as electrical plant rooms, electrical switchboards, near plant and equipment or heat sources i.e. honey extraction/wax melting areas.
- ✓ Have proper procedures around 'hot work' such as wax melting or welding. These include having a fire watch, designated welding areas or welding curtains and stopping welding an hour before close. Open fires should also be treated as "hot work".
- ✓ Keep all electrical equipment clean and free of dust and other combustible build-up. Ensure all electrical equipment, switchboards and controllers are regularly inspected and maintained by a certified electrician.
- ✓ Maintain strict smoking controls for the site or make it a smoke-free site to reduce the risk of fire. If smoking is allowed have designated areas and a safe way for smoking materials to be disposed of.
- ✓ Keep areas within 10m of buildings free of long grass/vegetation that could burn in an out of control scrub fire. Create fire breaks by removing dead or dying trees, keeping large trees pruned, removing low branches and keeping grass short.

Keeping things secure



While there's usually not a lot of activity during the production off-season, some storage areas could still hold large quantities of drums containing honey or palletised 'wet' frames. These are worth protecting.

Best practice

- Consider installing a monitored intruder alarm with a security patrolled response or, if you're a little too remote, this could be self-monitored in conjunction with regular inspections of the property.
- Invest in a CCTV system which records and monitors activity on site to help track transport operators and other visitors. Modern camera systems provide high resolution, infrared capability and don't cost the earth. Monitoring can be via a monitoring company or via an app on your phone.

- Remove keys from vehicles such as fork-lifts when they are unsupervised. Keep keys in a secure location after hours.
- Make sure that any high value products stored inside are in a well secured area or lock-up. Have an end of day lock-up routine for when you leave, making sure all doors, windows, gates and padlocks are secured.

Must haves

- ✓ Invest in good quality fencing for any yards and make sure any entry/exit gates are secured with closed shackle padlocks.
- ✓ Install good perimeter and yard security lighting around entry doors and yard spaces.

Clear signage and smart storage



Hazardous substances such as flammable liquids and gasses need to be stored and handled safely, and it's important to have clear signage in order to meet MPI and Worksafe requirements.

Best practice

- Display clear signage at all entry gates to the premises highlighting any hazardous products such as gas bottles, cleaning chemicals, fuels, and oils for example.

Must haves

- ✓ Make sure all hazardous substances are stored appropriately in fit-for-purpose dangerous goods bunkers or cabinets and well away from honey storage or processing areas. These areas should be well signposted.

- ✓ House all flammable gases outside the buildings and within secured caged enclosures if possible.
- ✓ Limit the quantities of hazardous substances inside the buildings to working quantities only.
- ✓ Familiarise yourself with the regulations and Worksafe requirements around hazardous goods use and storage. Further information can be obtained from the Worksafe website ([worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/hazardous-substances](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/hazardous-substances)). Think about getting professional advice from a Compliance Certifier or specialist in this field if you're in any doubt.

Top tips for transportation



Some processing sites receive high volumes of vehicles during the season, and this can include heavy vehicles and transport machinery. Think about introducing controls around accessibility and parking to minimise the chance of accidents or impact damage to buildings and plant.

Best practice

- Ensure all access roads, gateways, driveways and bridges are fit for purpose for the types of vehicles accessing the site, particularly heavy or large ones.

- Consider providing designated parking and loading areas, and perhaps even strong steel bollards, to reduce the likelihood of impact damage to buildings from heavy vehicles.
- Make sure any third-party transport and storage facilities have liability insurance.

Legal hot spots



Familiarise yourself with regulations that apply to your business to help you stay safe.

Best practice

- Biosecurity is an important aspect of beekeeping and you should be aware of the governance around it – please refer to mpi.govt.nz/processing/honey-and-bee-products

- Remember to keep product batch, tracking and recall identification controls up to date as part of your policies and Response Management Plan.

Must haves

- ✓ **Be aware of, and stick to all Health & Safety regulations. See [worksafe.govt.nz](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz) for references and obligations.**

Visit vero.co.nz/risk-profiler to check out our other advice sheets for more tips and in-depth information about managing risk.

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