In response to COVID-19 Emergency Declarations by the State of Utah and Salt Lake County, several changes in bee inspection procedures have been implemented to reduce exposure and help prevent transmission of the virus.

The Salt Lake County Health Department is committed to safeguarding not only the health of its beekeepers but also their bees. Spring is recognized as a critical phase in the colony life cycle, and the bee inspection service will remain available throughout this difficult time for all those that wish to participate in the program. Please call or text Peter Somers at 801 874 2999 with your requested inspection time and date. The following precautions are in effect until further notice:

To minimize opportunities for Covid-19 to spread, inspections will be conducted without the beekeeper present to satisfy the need for social distancing. Although not ideal, this change in procedure represents a powerful line of defense against virus transmission.

Bee inspections are conducted for the purpose of preventing the spread of disease, and established procedures already have as their objective an environment that resists the spread of pathogens. For example, rubbing alcohol kills Covid-19 in under a minute and will continue to be an important tool for keeping hive tools and other surfaces free of viruses while preventing colony exposure to the disinfectant. Fresh, sterile gloves will continue to be used from start to finish, with the knowledge that Covid-19:

- remains infectious on inanimate surfaces (such as cloth) for 9 days at room temperature
- remains infectious for 3 days on plastic and 2 days on steel
- viability is significantly reduced at 86F
- is quickly killed (under a minute) with isopropyl alcohol, hydrogen peroxide or bleach

Basic guidelines for resisting transmission of the virus, as researched by authors at covert19.com:

“Avoid human contacts (3 feet distance) in endemic areas (sick people) and thoroughly wash your hands (20 seconds) frequently with soap (or disinfectants) after human contact is recommended. Contact tracing, knowing who you met and where you’ve been helps healthcare professionals find the source of an infection and inform others who may be at risk. The CDC also recommends you avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, stay home when you are sick, and cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue.”

Obviously, inspections will not be conducted if symptoms develop in any of the participants:

“If infected with Covid-19 you may develop mild to severe illness and possibly death depending on your overall health. Look for fever, cough and shortness of breath which develop within 2-14 days after infection. The US Center for Disease Control (CDC) does not recommend face mask usage if you are not infected, not a public health worker or within close contact with and infected person but what we see in China is widespread use of face masks given the fact that everyone is suspected especially in endemic zones. Avoiding human contacts (3 feet distance) in endemic areas (sick people) and thoroughly washing your hands (20 seconds) frequently with soap (or disinfectants) after human contacts is recommended.”

Thank you for working together with us to help secure the health of honey bees and their keepers throughout Salt Lake County and beyond!