

The Florida Administrative Code (FAC) associated with honey bees and beekeepers ([Rule 5B-54](#)) has undergone some changes that will have an effect on beekeeping operations in Florida. This post will summarize the changes and what they mean for you and your bees.



Defining the Industry

Definitions within codes, laws, and statutes allows for the proper interpretation of our rules. As such, the recent changes to 5B-54 FAC included the addition of many bee-related definitions including nuc, motherline, and top-bar hive among others. Additionally, beekeeping operations can now be defined based on size. As a beekeeper, you may be classified as a 1) backyard [1-40 colonies], 2) sideline [41-100 colonies], or 3) commercial [>100 colonies] beekeeper.

Mark Your Bees

Before these rules changes, all registered Florida beekeepers were issued two numbers on their apiary registration certificate, including a registration number (FLO*****) and a firm number (480*****). Moving forward, only the firm number will be relevant. It is this number that you will need to have permanently marked on the outside of your hive bodies.

Additionally, commercial beekeeping operations must visually display emergency contact information at each apiary location that is “visible to the public”. This information will include the apiary owner’s name and phone number.



Selling Bees

As of March 27th, 2018, if you are selling bee colonies (nucs, full colonies, etc.) in Florida you must follow these two steps. First, your queens must come from a certified queen source. This is to ensure European motherlines across the state. Second, you must be certified by the state as a Stock Dealer. As a registered Stock Dealer in Florida, you are **not** required to permanently mark the hives that you plan to sell. Rather, the individual that you sell the colony to will be responsible for marking it with his/her firm number. For information on how to become a Stock Dealer, contact your local apiary inspector. You can find your local inspector [here](#).

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