

Thank you for purchasing bees from Gold Star Honeybees. Yay! Bees!

Are you wondering what to expect when you order honeybees shipped to you in the mail? We thought you might be. So this document is an outline of the way it is supposed to work, **including what to do if something goes wrong during the shipping process.** We would like to thank Senator Susan Collins' office for initiating the conversations between Gold Star Honeybees and the United States Postal Service (USPS) that helped us to fine tune these details of safely shipping honeybees.

About how we ship bees:

The bee shipping labels are created via the USPS website. Your label may be prepared several days in advance of your bees actually being shipped. You will receive an email from Gold Star Honeybees when we create the label. The email and the label will show the **expected ship date**. Please note that this is **NOT** the expected delivery date. The shipping method is Priority Mail. (The Post Office will not "put the bees in the air" - meaning they won't fly them. So bees ship only via ground transportation.)

About the United States Postal Service:

The Post Office's service statement about anticipated delivery times with Priority Mail shipping is that it takes "3-5 days." Sometimes they are actually a bit quicker (2-3), and sometimes, though not very often, it takes a little longer (5-6). It depends on where you are located. Again, it's not an exact science. There is a tracking number, and a bar code on each package, as well as a handwritten note saying: "CALL UPON ARRIVAL" and your phone number. But please be aware: sometimes, the Post Office doesn't scan the bar code at every stop along the way. So you COULD conceivably receive the email that says your label has been generated, then the next thing you hear, the post office is calling you and asking you to "Please come and get your bees!" without ever seeing any tracking updates in between. That happens. Don't worry.

Beyond the call of duty:

Sometimes your post person will bring your bees right to your door, which can be good or can be risky depending upon whether there is a safe place for them to be left if you are not at home. We can't effectively control that part of the process - so it's good if you communicate in advance with your local post office and let them know you are expecting a shipment of honeybees. They will do their level best to work with you. Sometimes, the post office will even call you on a Sunday, or on a holiday weekend if your bees land at your location on a non-business day. That's what we call going beyond the call of duty, and we appreciate it when they do that! We can't guarantee they will do this - but if they do, be sure to thank them profusely!

When you pick up your bees at the Post Office:

When you go to pick up the bees - **look** at the package. Even a healthy package will have some dead bees on the bottom. Be aware that a package containing **up to an inch** of dead bees is still considered viable in the industry.

Here's what you should do if there is a problem with the PACKAGE:

If the package arrives 1) **with all the bees dead**; or 2) with **more than an inch of dead bees** on the bottom of the package; or 3) if the package itself is **broken or damaged**, then you should do the following:

1) Take a photograph of the damaged/dead/broken package and **email it to us at: bees@goldstarhoneybees.com**.

2) Request that the USPS employee prepare **Form PS 2856 - Damage Report of Insured Parcel and Contents**. Without this form, Gold Star Honeybees cannot file for the insurance we purchase on the packages, and **we will not be able to replace your bees at no cost to you**.

3) Request that the USPS employee prepare **Form PS 3831 - Receipt for Articles Damaged in Mails**. Please take a photograph of the receipt and **email it to us at: bees@goldstarhoneybees.com**.

4) Call Gold Star Honeybees. Our number is [207-449-1121](tel:207-449-1121). It's a busy time and you may not get us in person, so be sure to leave a message with your name, location and phone number to let us know there was a problem. If you have your order number too, that's very helpful for us.

PLEASE NOTE: If you follow this procedure carefully, we will be able to ship a replacement package of bees to you at no cost, subject to the availability of additional packages of bees. If no more bees are available or you are unable to receive bees on an available ship date, you may choose to receive a refund for the price of the package that arrived dead/damaged. **But without the completed Forms PS 2856 and PS 3831, we cannot offer you either a replacement package or a refund at no cost to you.** So assess the package carefully. If there is more than an inch of dead bees - request that these two forms be completed.

Some fine print: Technically, the USPS is supposed to then take the dead/damaged package from you at this point. If they are not willing to do this, because there are still some live bees in the package, and they want you to "get them out of here!" - **FIRST BE SURE TO GET THE TWO FORMS PS 2856 and PS 3831 filled out**, then let them advise you as to the disposition of the package.

Next? Hive the Bees:

Bees need to fly. Being cooped up in a package is not their favorite thing. So your task as beekeeper is to hive the bees as soon as it is **PRACTICAL**. By practical we mean that your schedule allows it, the weather is cooperating, and that you have all the tools you need already in place. We know that the bees don't always show up on the perfect day to match your schedule, and we also know that sometimes they arrive on a cold day, or a rainy day. (Or even a snowy day!) So hiving them as soon as practical is your goal. If waiting one more day means you will have sunny warm weather instead of rainy windy weather - by all means wait it out. The bees can tolerate approximately 10 days (maximum!) in the shipping package. Some of those days will have gone by already - from the day the bees

were put into the package to the day you received them - but there are usually a few days worth of leeway. So hive them quickly, but be PRACTICAL about this.

How do I install my bees into my Gold Star Top Bar Hive?

1) Here's the link to the Gold Star Hive Startup Handbook, in .pdf format.

<http://bit.ly/GSHHandbook>

2) Here's the link to our YouTube video "How to Install a Package of Bees into a Gold Star Top Bar Hive:" <http://bit.ly/GSHInstallvideo>

3) There is a detailed description of how to hive your bees in *The Thinking Beekeeper - A Guide to Natural Beekeeping in Top Bar Hives*, written by Christy Hemenway and available for sale through www.goldstarhoneybees.com or at your favorite bookstore.

Now... What about the queen?

Let me just mention something here that would seem obvious, but in the excitement of getting your bees, it can sometimes get overlooked. When you open the package of bees, and you prepare to install the queen cage - **LOOK** at the queen cage! Identify your queen. She will probably have traveled with several worker bees in the queen cage as companions. She may or may not be marked - we prefer not to mark them, since the bees sometimes see the marking as a defect and hurt her in trying to remove it. In any case - take a good look. You can tell her from the companion bees in the following ways: Her abdomen is longer than theirs; her wings are shorter than her body, theirs are the same length as their body; her body color will be more solid than striped when compared to the worker bees; and her thorax will be shiny, not fuzzy like the worker bees. (See attached pic)

What if there is a problem with the queen?

You will only be able to tell whether the queen is dead or alive when you get to your bee yard and prepare to install your bees in the hive. Please see the attached picture of a queen bee for reference. **Your bees cannot survive without a queen!** A dead queen will mean a dead package and we file insurance claims accordingly.

Here's what you should do if the QUEEN bee is dead:

Take the queen cage with you, go back to the post office and do the following:

1) Take a photograph of the dead queen in her cage and **email it to us at:** bees@goldstarhoneybees.com.

2) Request that the USPS employee prepare **Form PS 2856 - Damage Report of Insured Parcel and Contents**. Without this form, Gold Star Honeybees cannot file for the insurance we purchase on the packages, and **we will not be able to replace your bees at no cost to you.**

3) Request that the USPS employee prepare **Form PS 3831 - Receipt for Articles Damaged in Mails**. Please take a photograph of the receipt and **email it to us at:** bees@goldstarhoneybees.com.

4) Call Gold Star Honeybees. Our number is [207-449-1121](tel:207-449-1121). It's a busy time and you may not get us in person, so be sure to leave a message with your name, location and phone number to let us know there was a problem. If you have your order number too, that's very helpful for us.

PLEASE NOTE: If you follow this procedure carefully, we will be able to ship a replacement package of bees to you at no cost, subject to the availability of additional packages of bees. If no more bees are available or you are unable to receive bees on an available ship date, you may choose to receive a full refund for the price of the package that arrived with a dead/damaged queen. **But without the completed Forms PS 2856 and PS 3831, we cannot offer you either a replacement package or a refund at no cost to you.**

Some more fine print: Technically, the USPS is supposed to then take the dead/damaged queen from you at this point. But if there were live bees in the package, now in the hive, that dead queen may keep them happy until you receive a replacement package, and you may be able to combine them. So if they will let you, take the dead queen back home with you and hang the cage in the hive. **BUT FIRST BE SURE TO GET FORMS PS 2856 and PS 3831 filled out.** Then let them advise you as to the disposition of the queen.

Here's what you should do if there is NO problem with the PACKAGE(s):

Do the Bee Happy Dance! You can make this dance up as you go - it's a little bit like the dance beekeepers do when they spot the first dandelion in the spring. (Videos of the Bee Happy Dance are always appreciated! Be aware however, that we are VERY likely to post them on Facebook and/or YouTube. ☺)

Take a picture of your package and send it to us with a cheery little email. We often get wonderful reports telling us that the package was so beautiful and so healthy that the beekeeper was able to count the number of dead bees in the package. Sometimes this number is less than 10! We **LOVE** those reports.

Wow... That's a lot of information!

Yes, we know. But most of it you probably won't even need to know, because generally this process goes really well and is a ton of fun. So, don't let all this "stuff" overwhelm you. We just want you to be prepared and know what to do in advance - because we know it can be difficult to get in touch with us via the phone or email during bee season.

Thank you again - at Gold Star Honeybees, we are really excited to be part of your beekeeping journey and to bring you treatment-free bees.

We wish you all the best this coming beekeeping season and remember - we love to get pictures!!! Send them to: bees@goldstarhoneybees.com

Bzzzzzt!



Queen Bee with workers



Here is a picture of a queen honeybee. Notice her thorax is dark and smooth and shiny; her wings are shorter than her body; and her abdomen is more solid than striped.

The other bees in this picture are worker bees; there will be several worker bee “attendants” traveling with the queen.


Form PS 3831, Receipt for Articles(s) Damaged in Mails:

U.S. Postal Service		Date	1/1/15
RECEIPT FOR ARTICLE(S) DAMAGED IN MAILS			
Receipt is acknowledged of the following article(s) submitted in connection with a claim for indemnity for damage to the parcel described.			
Received From		SAMPLE	
Registered, Insured, COD, or Express Mail No.	Date Mailed	Addressed To (Name and address)	
9999	12/25/14		
Mailed At			
North Pole		10 LOTS OF TOYS LANE NORTH POLE	
Mailed By			
Santa		Signature and Title	
Article(s) Received		Santa	
BEES		Post Office, State and ZIP Code	

PS Form 3831, June 1986

(Duplicate to be attached to article(s))

This is form PS 2856 - Damage Report of Insured Parcel and Contents

		Damage Report of Insured Parcel and Contents	
FOR USPS USE ONLY			
1. Customer Name		2. Mailing Receipt/Article #	
3. Mailing Container Type/Brand <input type="checkbox"/> Box <input type="checkbox"/> Padded Envelope <input type="checkbox"/> Tube <input type="checkbox"/> Flat <input type="checkbox"/> USPS® Packaging (Express Mail® / Priority Mail®) <input type="checkbox"/> Ready Post® Packaging <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please describe) _____		4. Mailing Container Construction <input type="checkbox"/> Sturdy <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Flimsy	
6. Packing Materials (Check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> No Packing Material Submitted <input type="checkbox"/> Bubble Wrap <input type="checkbox"/> Styrofoam Peanuts <input type="checkbox"/> Double-boxes <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper <input type="checkbox"/> Foam <input type="checkbox"/> Tissue <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please describe) _____		5. Damage to Mailing Container (Check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> No Visible Damage <input type="checkbox"/> Cut, Torn, or Ripped <input type="checkbox"/> Liquid Damage <input type="checkbox"/> Crushed or Smashed <input type="checkbox"/> Soiled or Stained <input type="checkbox"/> Depression on Box <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please describe) _____	
7. Was container/packing material sufficient to protect contents from damage during normal handling? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure			
8. What appears to have been the cause of the damage? (Check all that apply and use your comments in the space provided below.) <input type="checkbox"/> Fragility of Contents <input type="checkbox"/> Crushing <input type="checkbox"/> Shock <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate Packaging <input type="checkbox"/> Leakage of Contents <input type="checkbox"/> Perishable Contents <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please describe) _____ Comments: _____			
9. List undamaged items included in the package. _____ _____ _____			
10. If there is no visible damage to the article(s), what is customer's evidence of damage? _____ _____			
11. Location of Damaged Articles POST OFFICE™ <input type="checkbox"/> City _____ State _____ ZIP+4 _____ Telephone No. (include area code) _____ CUSTOMER <input type="checkbox"/> Reason (check one) <input type="checkbox"/> Under \$25.00 <input type="checkbox"/> For Repairs <input type="checkbox"/> Claim Denied		Disposition of Articles <input type="checkbox"/> MRC - Date sent _____ (Claim paid - value \$25.00 and over) <input type="checkbox"/> Returned to Customer <input type="checkbox"/> Discarded - Date _____ (Claim paid - value under \$25.00 or Hazardous) <input type="checkbox"/> Return Date _____	
12. Reminder: Did you prepare a PS Form 3831, Receipt for Article(s) Damaged in Mails? If not, prepare one and mail it to the customer.			
13. Additional Comments: _____ _____			
14. Verified by: (Print Name) _____		Signature _____	Telephone No. (include area code) _____
14. Verified by: (Print Name) _____		ZIP Code™ _____	
When submitting claims, attach to PS Form 1000, Damage Inspection Request Letter, or Online Claim Summary and send to: Domestic: CLAIMS SERVICING SECTION ACCOUNTING SERVICES PO BOX 80143 ST LOUIS MO 63180-0143 International: CLAIMS SERVICING SECTION ACCOUNTING SERVICES PO BOX 80146 ST LOUIS MO 63180-0146			
			Round Date Stamp
PS Form 2856, March 2009 PSN 7530-09-000-3988			

SAMPLE