



THE LAW AND SELLING YOUR BEESWAX PRODUCTS

Value-added Beeswax

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Honey bees produce beeswax as well as honey and, weight for weight, beeswax sells for about three times the price of honey. It is also a lovely substance to work with and crying out to be used in products, adding value all the while. So why don't more of us produce beeswax polish, candles, skin creams and soaps for sale?

Well, if you think the labelling requirements for honey are onerous, that's nothing compared with the legal hurdles before you can sell even the most basic beeswax lip balm. There are also labelling requirements for polish and candles and regulations governing the sale of products via the Internet or by mail order.

I am writing this as a fellow beekeeper and a small-scale producer of cosmetics using beeswax and honey, beeswax candles and beeswax polish, all

of which I sell at local markets and also via a website. What follows is my understanding of the requirements of the law, an overview of the parts of various regulations that I think are likely to apply. It is not a complete guide, more a starting point.

Your Responsibility

It is up to you, as the manufacturer, to familiarise yourself with the relevant regulations and official guidelines that are readily available on the Internet. In fact, if you are going to sell cosmetic products these days, the first pre-requisite seems to be Internet access, time to read great swathes of legislation and the ability to make sense of them (recommended reading for insomniacs). As if that wasn't enough, a talent for IT to get you through the new Cosmetics Product Notification Portal will be very useful. Fortunately, the requirements for polish and candles are less complex.

Cosmetic Products – Adding Value

One of the best ways to add value to your beeswax is to make skin care products such as lip balm and moisturising lotion, with beeswax as a key ingredient. A small amount of honey can also be a useful addition to these products and a good selling point. Beeswax and honey can be used in soap which sells well at farmers' markets alongside other hive products. Many food markets will make an exception for beekeepers and allow you to sell non-food items as well as honey, so long as they are hive products.

Skin creams (including lip balm) and soap are classified by law as cosmetic products. If you are going to make and sell cosmetic products, you need to be aware of the relevant Regulations: the Cosmetic Products (Safety) Regulations 2008 (as amended) and a new European Regulation (EC/1223/2009) which came into force in July 2013.

Links to legislation and guidelines are given in the box overleaf:

Safety Assessment

Every cosmetic product placed on the market requires a safety assessment, carried out by a suitably qualified professional. There are now a number of companies offering these assessments and you can find them via Internet search engines or via soap-making suppliers. Most will help you set up your Product Information File and some will also help you formulate new recipes.

Product Information File

Your Product Information File consists of the safety assessment, plus details of the raw materials (such as date of purchase, batch numbers, supplier details, material safety data sheets (MSDS) which should be available from your supplier, etc). It also gives method of manufacture, packaging used and various other data relating to the product (for example any contraindications that have been notified, proof of any claims you are making for the product). This is where you keep records of every batch made.

Your Product Information File must be available for inspection at the address on your labels.



Before you sell your beeswax products, you must comply with current legislation

Labelling

Requirements are similar, in part, to those for labelling honey. Labels must include an address (at which your Product Information File is available).

Content

There must be an indication of the content by weight or by volume and a batch number or lot code. Unless it is already obvious, you must include the product's function. For example, if your product is called 'lip balm' that already gives the function, but if you choose to call it something obscure like 'Cherry Plum', you must also give its function as 'lip balm'.

If your product contains chemicals such as a UV filter and some preservatives, there are warnings which must be included on the label. These can be found in Schedule 6 of the 2008 regulations, but your assessor should be able to advise.

There must be a full list of ingredients in descending order of weight, using the INCI name (International Nomenclature of Cosmetic Ingredients). For example: water is known as aqua; beeswax is known as cera

alba; cocoa butter is known as theobroma cacao. You may list the English name in brackets if you wish. The list of INCI names is available on the Internet but, again, your assessor should be able to advise you.

Best Before Date

Products likely to deteriorate within 30 months of manufacture must have a best before date (date of minimum durability) shown in month and year. Products that do not require a date of minimum durability must have a 'period after opening' (PAO) date accompanied by the PAO symbol depicting an open jar.

This is an area where you should seek advice from your assessor and/or the person who helps you to formulate your recipes. The label should also include any special storage instructions for the product.

Restrictions on Ingredients

There are lists of banned substances which may not be used in any cosmetic product and substances which are restricted by percentage use in particular products. There is



Some of the candle pictograms

also a positive list of colours, UV-filters and preservatives – meaning only those on the list may be used. These lists are subject to change and updates.

The lists show up on the EU cosmetics database which is accessible via the Cosmetics Product Notification Portal (or ask your assessor!).

Cosmetics Product Notification Portal

Under the 2008 Regulations, you needed to notify BIS (the Government Department for Business, Innovation and Skills) that you were manufacturing and selling cosmetic products. There was no requirement to notify them of individual products. The European Directive has changed the procedure for notification since July 2013. Now, once the safety assessment has been carried out and before you place the product on the UK market, you must notify the product direct to the European Commission using the Cosmetics Product Notification Portal (CPNP). (For hyperlinks, see the box.)

The User Manual is 214 pages long. It takes a while to read from cover to cover. It took me even longer to get through the registration process and work out how to enter my products on the database.

At one point, I e-mailed them for advice and was told to contact my administrator and my IT department. The problem is that I am the administrator



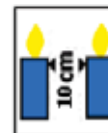
WARNING.



Never leave a burning candle unattended.



Put candle out of reach of children and pets.



Always leave at least 10cm distance between burning candles.



Do not burn candles on or near anything that can catch fire.

(ie, the person who is entering the product details on the database) and I don't have an IT department. If you enjoy IT, you'll probably love it. If not, see if you can find an assessor that will help you with this too.

Polish Label Requirements

Beeswax polish contains turpentine and, although this is a natural product, it is dangerous and there are warnings that must be included on the label. The familiar polish warning label with the black cross on a red background is being phased out by June 2015. The new Classification, Labelling and Packaging (CLP) Regulations are bringing in new pictograms and hazard statements that must appear on the label.

The new labels will need four pictograms, the word 'Danger' and nine hazard warning statements.

H226 Flammable liquid and vapour.

H302 Harmful if swallowed.

H304 May be fatal if swallowed and enters airways.

H312 Harmful in contact with skin.

The pictograms required on polish labels



- H315 Causes skin irritation.
 H317 May cause an allergic skin reaction.
 H319 Causes serious eye irritation.
 H332 Harmful if inhaled.
 H411 Toxic to aquatic life with long lasting effects.

Candles

The General Product Safety Regulations 2005 required 'due diligence' where the risks posed by a product are not obvious. While the risks posed by a burning candle may be obvious to most, candles are still a cause of many house fires.

In 2007, candle labelling requirements changed. There are now five warning signs that must be included and 11 that should be included where appropriate. These warnings can be given on the packaging or on a separate leaflet handed out with the candle when it is sold.

Should you be unwilling to include both pictogram and text, the European standard expresses a clear preference for the pictograms because they are 'non-verbally comprehensive'. I have to confess that, without the text, I don't think I would understand them.

There is a good summary from Hampshire Trading Standards (see box):

Internet Sales

If you sell anything over the internet, there are more regulations of which you need to be aware. These include your terms and conditions, delivery arrangements, your returns policy, etc. My trading standards officer even required me to pin a small plaque with our business name and address on the door of our honey shed.

There is another link to information about requirements

for online selling in the box:

It is always worth contacting your local Trading Standards Office if you are selling your products, online or locally. My local officer was able to give me a number of prepared information sheets and, where he had no information readily available, he later e-mailed me with links to relevant websites.



The label over the honey house door



Internet Links

This article refers to a number of very long internet links, which is fine if you are viewing it digitally. To make life easier for readers of our hard copy, this article has also gone into the *Bee Craft* Information Centre on our website and all the links will be live for you there. [↪](#)

Links to Legislation and Guidelines

Selling Products

- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/1284/contents/made>
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/39334/10-761-guide-to-cpsr.pdf
- <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:342:0059:0209:en:PDF>
- http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/sectors/cosmetics/documents/guidelines/index_en.htm

Cosmetics Product Notification Portal (CPNP)

- http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/sectors/cosmetics/files/pdf/cpnp_new_en.pdf
- http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/sectors/cosmetics/files/pdf/cpnp_user_manual_en.pdf

Classification, Labelling and Packaging (CLP) Regulations

- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/chemical-classification/legal/clp-regulation.htm>
- <http://echa.europa.eu/information-on-chemicals/cl-inventory>
- <http://clp-inventory.echa.europa.eu/Pictograms/GHS07.png>
- <http://clp-inventory.echa.europa.eu/Pictograms/GHS02.png>
- <http://clp-inventory.echa.europa.eu/Pictograms/GHS09.png>
- <http://clp-inventory.echa.europa.eu/Pictograms/GHS08.png>

Candle Labelling

- <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/tradingstandards/product-safety/candles.htm>
- http://www.satara.co.uk/spotlight/article_view.php?id=120

Online Sales Requirements

- <https://www.gov.uk/online-and-distance-selling-for-businesses/overview>

Bee Craft Beekeeping Information Centre

- www.bee-craft.com/beekeeping-information-centre/