

Honey Heating in Drums & IBCs

Honey has been consumed and used for medicinal purposes for centuries due to its numerous beneficial phytochemicals and substances for human health. However, all honey will naturally crystallise over time. Melting the crystals by heating can aid in processing honey, but heat can also affect the properties of honey in various ways. For instance, overheating can destroy beneficial ingredients such as enzymes and antioxidants. Heat may also affect honey colour, flavour, and texture. Additionally, honey quality can be damaged if unevenly heated over a long period of time or if heated at a high temperature over a short period of time. So additional caution should be taken when heating honey in any container.

One successful heating method for honey producers is choosing a flexible heating jacket option from SBH Solutions. Our heater jackets are very efficient energy users ideal for evenly warming honey in drums and Intermediate Bulk Containers (IBCs). They provide a great non-aggressive way to liquefy honey and to maintain your required processing temperature once it is reached. We partner with industry-leading UK manufacturer LMK Thermosafe to provide the widest range of honey heating options in Australia to fit most container size requirements.

Best Honey Heating Practices for smaller and medium size batches

[Drum Heating Jackets](#)

Some smaller users find that using an [HHND 750W jacket](#) that covers only one-third of a drum can work well when a drum is indoors and /or is covered with some external form of insulation such as a horse blanket. The HHND 750W jacket has the advantage that it can also be wrapped around the circumference of 3 smaller containers such as 20 – 25 litre pails (subject to individual container diameters). For smaller size containers from 20 litres upwards, we have a range of insulated heater jackets to suit ([especially for 20 to 100 litres drums](#)), all thermostatically controlled. All our heater jackets will achieve even, gentle heating across the whole of the jacket and therefore container surface.

For 205 litre drums, our most satisfied customers use the [HHD 1100W full-length insulated heating jacket](#). Not only does a full jacket minimise heat loss, it also evenly heats all the way around the drum, from top to bottom. Temperature control is achieved with a capillary thermostat, so leaving the heater on overnight will gently melt the honey without any discolouration or loss of quality.



All alternative heating methods such as base heaters or silicone band heaters rely on concentrated heat being applied to a limited surface area and heat radiating outwards from the source. This means that the product closest to the heat source is subjected to a high watt density and this can affect quality if the neighbouring product is unable to absorb heat quickly enough to dissipate this evenly.

Creating a heating envelope such as enclosed box with into which your drum is placed with a radiator to heat air can work. The attraction of this is generally low set up cost (if you build your own box) but running costs of any air heating product will be at least twice and up to ten times more expensive compared to an insulated heater jacket which is only heating the container itself.

Whatever heating method is used, we recommend that drums not be placed directly on concrete. Concrete acts as a heat sink and will draw heat away from the container. Best to place the drum on a poor heat conductor such as plywood board, or if smaller, on a wooden table.

IBC Heating Jackets



A full IBC with 1400kg honey can take up to 5 days to achieve a melt. If crystallised, it may take a week. For this application, we recommend the [IBC2 insulated heater jacket](#) with lid. This has two independent circuits each 1400W. This jacket has the advantage of allowing different temperature settings or you can even switch off the upper circuit when the product level in the container has dropped below halfway. Our total of 2800W for a twin circuit IBC insulated heater jacket is market-leading; always check heat output when making comparisons.

When heating IBCs, best results are achieved by placing the IBC on a plywood sheet or similar to minimise heat loss down into a concrete floor. The overnight ambient is also an important factor—one customer with freezing overnight temperatures had to build himself a makeshift insulated box around his IBC even with his IBC2 in place to minimise heat time.

Customised Heating Jackets

We can [custom-make heater jackets](#) to suit different drums, IBCs or tanks. Even large processors need heater jackets sometimes! For example, Capilano ordered a custom jacket for a steel tank feeding their sachet filling line; the honey initially heated in their oven needed to be kept warm to completely empty the tank over several days.

Rental

For HHD and IBC jackets, we offer trial before you buy. We also have some rental jackets for short-term heating requirements (such as candied honey) Ask us for details.

Our honey customers

We have small and medium-sized growers, processors and food manufacturers across Australia happy with our insulated heater jackets. These people have recognised that paying more for equipment that will do the job and is robust is worthwhile. Longevity and effective heating keeps overall costs down. Let's see what our customers say.

"When we ran off out of a 205 litre drum as it liquefied, we managed to get all the honey out of a candied drum within 24 hours, which is quite impressive." -- [Capilano](#)

"We've been using our jacket for 10 years – now looking a little dog-eared but still working a treat" – South Australian Honey Producer

"Originally we rented an IBC jacket to liquify candied honey. We were impressed it look less than a week so decided to buy a jacket. We asked for it to be made larger for flexibility to use on another tank and it wasn't a problem – we received it within six weeks of ordering" – Western Australian Honey Producer

"We've found these jackets invaluable in our factory to make processing honey for our production line smoother. – Victorian food manufacturer

Want to know more?

Download the Brochure for our flexible heating jackets [HERE](#), or the IBC Heater Jacket Specification Sheet [HERE](#) for more details.

Want to customise a heating jacket for your project?

Get in touch with us via email at info@sbhsolutions.com.au or call (08) 7122 1114, and our team will help you to find the best solution.

Want to know more about our heating jackets for honey via practical applications?

Please access our case studies [HERE](#) to learn more about Honey heating with LMK Thermosafe flexible jackets in practical application.