

# Floor Covering Media

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## Honeybee Horror



Disaster struck, as a commercial truck overturned; carrying 70,000 pounds of pollinator hives and 250 million honeybees. The incident in Whatcom County, Washington near the Canadian border prompted authorities to close the road while beekeepers worked diligently (in an effort to save as many as possible).



Whatcom County Emergency Response: The emergency response to the honeybee incident was coordinated by The Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management, responsible for emergency management services within unincorporated Whatcom County, along with the Emergency Management Council in seven cities and the Port of Bellingham under interlocal agreement. Local beekeepers have also been called in as specialized responders to help recover the escaped honeybees while emergency management officials manage road closures and public safety concerns. Emergency updates are being posted on Whatcom Ready's platforms to keep the public informed about the situation and road closures.

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Commercial Beekeeping Transportation Practices: Beekeeping operations must follow specific regulations when transporting honeybees across state lines. Bee shipments must be enclosed in secure, escape-proof packages to prevent incidents like the Washington spill. When transporting bees interstate, carriers need permits issued by state commissioners or certificates confirming the bees are disease-free. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (Abbreviated: FMCSA) provides special exemptions for bee transporters; including relief from the mandatory 30-minute rest break requirement when bees are in the vehicle, which the California Farm Bureau Federation originally requested, to protect bees from overheating during roadway stops.

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The primary rule for beehive transportation is to keep moving during daylight hours and rest at night, as bees use the sun for orientation. While bee haulers have certain exemptions from hours-of-service regulations, they must still avoid driver fatigue to ensure safe transport. Beekeepers engaged in seasonal bee transportation may also qualify for additional exemptions under apiarian industry provisions, though these typically apply when the beekeeper is personally operating the vehicle. These specialized regulations recognize the unique challenges of transporting live bees requiring continuous airflow and careful handling to prevent any colony losses and public safety incidents.



The rescue operation for the 250 million escaped honeybees involved more than a dozen beekeepers from Whatcom and Snohomish Counties who rushed to the scene after the semi-truck overturned at approximately 4:00 AM. Master beekeepers worked methodically to rebuild and reset the damaged hives that had been crushed or were leaning against each other after the crash. Volunteers wore protective suits in order to assist with the painstaking process of rebuilding the beehives frame by frame. Yet, despite their efforts, the beekeepers sadly acknowledged that significant losses were inevitable. But the surviving bees that were not recovered should start

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new hives locally.



The rescue team sourced specialized equipment (such as smoke machines) in an attempt to calm these agitated insects. A beekeeper responder at the scene noted that when the bees are angry, it can limit the effectiveness of this equipment. As the rescue operation reached its conclusion, the hive boxes were retrieved, repaired, and then put back into service; at which time, the authorities expect that most of the surviving bees should return to their hives.



Learn more about the incident by clicking on the source link provided [HERE](#).

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