

Beekeeper/Owner Preparations for Dealing with Vehicle Accidents

Beekeepers and their staff can do a lot to prepare themselves and their local first responders to avoid, prepare for, and respond to vehicle accidents that happen while beekeepers are transporting bees or equipment.

Drivers and Driver Preparation

1. Ensure all drivers understand the rules and procedures for driving in Canada with loads of bees.
2. Ensure drivers know what the proper procedures are should there be an accident while transporting bees. Ensure non-Canadian drivers understand how fire/police/ambulance respond to accidents here.
3. Ensure drivers are trained to properly secure loads, and familiar with truck weight limits to avoid overloads.
4. Ensure drivers monitor the weather and field conditions to avoid loss of control or rollovers.
5. In the event of an accident, the driver should be prepared to give first responders/911 operators the following information:
 - Driver name and contact number.
 - Company name and contact number.
 - Accident location — is it near any residential, school or public areas?
 - Any injuries or other parties involved.
 - Load composition (hives with bees or just honey boxes) and numbers.
 - Any personal protective equipment (veils, suits, etc.) available in the truck.

Company Preparation

- Keep extra bee veils in trucks for first responders or others who may need them in an emergency.
- Have a properly equipped first aid kit with an extra Epi-pen and antihistamines inside.
- Carry appropriate insurance coverage for your vehicle and bees/hives/other equipment.
- Keep trucks in good mechanical condition.

Working with First Responders

First responders have specific priorities that they work under:

- **Protect the public**
- **Protect property**
- **Protect the environment**

They will take whatever action they feel is appropriate to minimize the risk to the public and ensure the accident does not cause any further problems for the community at large.

Accident sites are managed under a site/emergency command structure where a single individual (usually the lead fireperson) manages the overall response. Beekeepers and their staff will need to work with the person in charge, provide responders with the necessary information for them to do their job, and seek approval before accessing the site to start recovering any bees or hives.

Working with First Responders

To improve the knowledge of local first responders and build positive working relationships, a beekeeper should approach the local fire department or municipal emergency management agency and discuss opportunities for training and information sharing.

This training could cover:

- How to work around large numbers of bees
- Personal Protective Equipment
- How to protect bystanders
- How to calm bees while minimizing the numbers of bees killed
- How to contact local beekeepers for assistance in the event it is an operator from outside the area
- How to deal with any language issues, as the drivers involved could include foreign workers

Working with the Media

- After an accident or incident there is no requirement to give an interview to the media.
- Contact the Alberta Beekeepers Commission or the provincial apiculturist if you need help or advice regarding the media.

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Contacts

When there is an accident, the owner/operator should advise the provincial apiculturist. The provincial apiculturist may also be contacted to provide assistance and advice on the emergency response.

Alberta Provincial Apiculturist

- Office – 780-415-2309
- bee@gov.ab.ca

Alberta Beekeepers Commission

- Office - 780-489-6949;
office@albertabeekeepers.ca

