

Deer-Motor Vehicle Crash Safety Tips



A study published by the U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that there are between 1 million and 2 million collisions between vehicles and large wildlife animals in the United States every year. And, since October and November are the prime months for deer-mating season, the animals are especially active, with peak times at dusk and dawn.

The following are tips for lowering your risk of a crash with a deer.

- **Slow down!** In areas with a large deer population, or where there are deer warning signs, drivers should reduce their speed.
- **Always wear your seat belt!** It's your best protection from injuries in the event of a crash.
- **Watch for eyes reflecting in your headlights.** Try to look far down the road and scan the roadsides, especially when driving through field edges, heavily wooded areas, or posted deer crossing areas. The sooner you see a deer on or approaching a road, the better your chances of avoiding a crash.
- **Remember that deer travel in herds.** If you see one deer cross the road in front of you, don't assume that all is clear. Deer herds can be fairly large, and the animals often move one right behind the other.
- **Do not place confidence in "deer whistles" or other "ultra-sonic" devices** that claim to prevent deer collisions.
- Break firmly when you notice a deer in or near your path.
- **Maintain control of your vehicle.** It is important that you not lose control of your vehicle or veer into the path of an oncoming vehicle to avoid contact with an animal. Loss of control usually results in a more serious crash.
- **Do not swerve**—it can confuse the deer as to where to run—and cause you to lose control and hit a tree or another car. The one exception to the "don't swerve" advice applies to motorcyclists. On a motorcycle, you should slow down, brake firmly and then swerve if necessary to avoid hitting the deer. If you must swerve, always try to stay within your lane to avoid hitting other objects
- **If you hit a deer,** get your vehicle off the road if possible, and then call a law-enforcement agency. Walking on a highway is dangerous, so stay in your vehicle if you can.
- Don't try to move the animal if it is still alive.