

How to Avoid a Deer – Vehicle Crash

Cruising the roads to enjoy autumn's colors? Be on the lookout for deer. Animal collisions rise dramatically in the fall when deer are mating and the days are shortening, increasing the overlap of when deer are most active and when people are driving. **Driver awareness is key**, but sometimes in our day to day lives distractions overcome even the most mindful of drivers. So here are a few reminders to ensure you have a safe commute no matter where you are and what steps to take should a deer collision occur.

- Heed deer crossing signs.** Decrease vehicle speed in these areas and drive with extra caution. The sooner a deer is seen on or approaching a roadway, the better the chance of avoiding a crash.

- Be especially watchful** in areas near woods, farmlands, water and areas known to have a large deer population. When driving through these areas, keep eyes moving and continually glance to both sides of the road.

- Do not rely on devices** such as deer whistles, deer fences and reflectors to deter deer as these devices have not proven to be consistently effective.

- At night, use high-beam headlights** because they better illuminate the edges of the road where deer may linger. Look for the reflection of light in a deer's eyes. If you see eye shine reflected in your headlights, slow down immediately.

- Headlights tend to stun deer when a vehicle approaches.** If a deer is spotted, be alert, slow down quickly and sound the horn to try and scare it away.



- If deer are near the road, **use the emergency flashers to alert other drivers** of their presence.

- Keep in mind that if one deer is spotted, more are usually nearby. **Deer often travel in groups** and in a single file line.

- Do not assume to know how a deer will react.** Deer may dart suddenly in front of you, stop in the middle of the road, double back to the side of the road where they came from or rush across to the other side of the road.

- If a collision with a deer seems inevitable, brake firmly and attempt to stop.** Do not swerve to avoid the deer as vehicle control may be lost, increasing the risk of injury due to hitting another vehicle or a fixed object like a tree. Do not veer for deer.

- If a deer is struck, stay away from it.** It may just be stunned and could become aggressive. A frightened and wounded deer can hurt you or further injure itself. Report the accident to local law enforcement.