

Dept. of Transportation: As deer activity increases, drivers need to slow down, be alert

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The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), State Patrol and partner law enforcement agencies are reminding motorists to be alert for the potential of deer darting across roadways during upcoming weeks. Deer/vehicle crashes typically peak during the October and November “rutting” period when bucks pursue potential mates.

“The best strategy to protect yourself and minimize the chance of hitting a deer is to buckle up, slow down and watch the road ahead carefully,” said David Pabst, Director of WisDOT’s Bureau of Transportation Safety. “Deer can be seen any time of day, but they’re

especially active around dusk and dawn.”

Last year in Wisconsin, there were 18,414 reported deer/vehicle crashes that resulted in injuries to 556 motorists and nine fatalities (six were motorcyclists). Counties with higher traffic volumes and deer populations tend to record the most crashes. A [county-by-county](#) breakdown indicates Dane County had the most reported deer/vehicle crashes in Wisconsin last year with 859, followed by Waukesha County with 823 and Washington County with 758.

To avoid deer crashes and motorist injuries, WisDOT offers the following tips:

1. Slow down, eliminate distractions, and make sure all vehicle occupants are buckled up.
2. If you see one deer cross in front of you, watch for more. One long blast from your vehicle's horn may frighten the deer away.
3. If a collision with a deer is unavoidable, brake firmly and stay in your lane. Avoid sudden swerving which can result in a loss of vehicle control and a more serious crash. If you hit a deer:
 1. Get your vehicle safely off the road if possible and call law enforcement. Be prepared to describe your specific location.
 2. It's generally safest to stay buckled-up inside your vehicle. Walking along a highway is always dangerous as you could be struck by another vehicle.
 3. Don't attempt to move an injured deer.

The increase in deer activity this time of year also results in more car-killed-deer along Wisconsin roadways. WisDOT works with private vendors, county highway departments and law enforcement to handle deer carcass removal along numbered highways (the state highway system). Counties are responsible for removing deer carcasses along county highways. Municipalities handle deer carcass removal along local roads. To report car-killed-deer:

- Deer carcasses on the active, traveled portion of a highway represent an urgent safety hazard and should be reported by calling 911;
- If the carcass is off the traveled portion of the roadway, contact the appropriate county sheriff's department using the agency's [non-emergency phone number](#);

- To facilitate the efficient and prompt removal of a deer carcass, provide specific location information such as proximity to a mile post, intersecting highway, exit or mailbox number.

Drivers are reminded to move over or slow down when approaching stopped emergency responders, tow trucks and highway maintenance vehicles – including crews removing deer carcasses. More information on the Car-Killed-Deer program can be found on the [WisDOT website](#).