

Dept. of Transportation: Motorists asked to be alert for deer

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Increase in deer activity requires motorists - especially motorcyclists - to be alert

Officials with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and Division of State Patrol are reminding motorists to be extra alert for deer along roadways. Deer activity typically increases during May and June as females search for places to give birth and young deer separate from their mothers.

“The best thing motorists can do to protect themselves and avoid hitting a deer is buckle up, slow down and scan the road ahead carefully,” said David Pabst, Director of WisDOT’s Bureau of Transportation Safety.

Crashes between deer and motor vehicles tend to peak in the fall, however the May/June period is when motorists are most likely to be injured in a deer/vehicle crash. Last year in Wisconsin, there were 18,408 reported deer/vehicle crashes, resulting in injuries to 555 motorists and nine fatalities. Of the 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.

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

- Slow down, eliminate distractions, and make sure all vehicle occupants are buckled up. Motorcyclists should wear protective gear.
- Deer can be seen at any time, but are most active in early morning and evening hours.

- If you see one deer cross in front of you, watch for more. One long blast from your vehicle's horn may frighten the animal away.
- If a collision with a deer is unavoidable:
 - Brake firmly. Stay in your lane. Avoid sudden swerving which can result in a loss of vehicle control and a more serious crash.
 - Motorcyclists should slow down, brake firmly and swerve if necessary to avoid hitting the deer. Try to stay within your lane to avoid hitting other objects.
- If you hit a deer:
 - Get your vehicle safely off the road if possible and call law enforcement. Be prepared to describe your specific location.
 - 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.
 - Don't attempt to move an injured deer.

WisDOT works with private vendors, county highway departments and law enforcement to handle the removal of deer carcasses along state highways. 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 should be prepared 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](#).