

Avoiding Vehicle Accidents with Deer

Vehicle accidents happen all the time. The same is true for accidents involving deer; however, they typically happen more frequently in the fall. Nearly half of all vehicle accidents involving deer occur from October to December. Deer also are more active in the spring when snow disappears and the grass begins to green.

There is no way to fully prevent an accident with a deer; however, by following the tips below, you can reduce your risk significantly.



Tips to Avoid Unplanned Meetings with Deer

- Always wear your seat belt and keep your vehicle well maintained.
- Keep your vehicle glass clean to help reduce sun glare and to give you better vision at night. Stay focused – keep your eyes moving, watching from left to right, and far in front of you.
- Most accidents occur between dusk and dawn. Deer tend to be more active during the early morning and late afternoon hours. Avoiding these times of the day will reduce the chances of accidents.
- Try to find alternate routes of travel away from heavily wooded areas where deer tend to be more congregated.
- Reduced your speed in areas with a large deer population, or where there are deer crossing signs. Deer crossing signs indicate areas where deer trails cross roadways. Drivers should have increased awareness at these locations.
- When driving at night, use your high-beam lights when there is no opposing traffic. The high beams will illuminate the eyes of deer on or near a roadway. Watch for the reflection of deer eyes and for deer silhouettes on the shoulder of the road. High-beam headlights will not necessarily frighten or deter deer, but will allow you to better see the animal.
- Deer tend to fixate on headlights, so don't blink or flash them. It may startle the animal causing it to move.
- Try to look far down the road and scan the roadsides, especially when driving by adjacent fields and heavily wooded areas. Early detection and driving at a speed that gives you time to react is paramount.
- Don't stop and pull over to observe deer. This can be dangerous and expose your vehicle to traffic approaching from behind. It is best to pass the deer safely and move on, without disrupting traffic.
- When a driver spots a deer on the road, you should slow down to avoid hitting the deer, but do not swerve. This can cause loss of control of the vehicle and may lead to a larger accident with a tree or other object.

Naturally, drivers want to avoid a collision with deer; however, the cost of losing control of the vehicle could be much greater. If a collision with the deer can't be avoided, try not to oversteer. It may be safer to brush the animal at an angle if possible, while maintaining control of your vehicle.

By following the tips listed above, you can reduce your risk of a deer accident. Drive at a safe speed and give yourself time to react.