

DON'T VEER FOR DEER

Don't Veer for Deer TBT 11-13-2023

Deer-vehicle crashes peak in the autumn months, but a large deer population can make them a safety hazard on the road all year long. Deer crashes are especially dangerous for motorcyclists - a group which accounted for a vast majority of vehicle-deer related deaths over the last three years. An important safety tip for drivers is to never veer for deer — swerving can take a motorist into oncoming traffic or off the road.

Motorist Safety Tips to Avoid Deer Crashes

- Drive at safe speeds and always be buckled up.
- Be especially cautious from 6 to 9 p.m., when deer are most active.
- Use high beams as much as possible at night, especially in deer-active areas.
- Motorists: don't swerve to avoid a deer. Swerving can cause motorists to lose control and travel off the road or into oncoming traffic.
- Motorcyclists: Avoid night and low-light riding periods. A rider's best response when encountering a deer is to use both brakes for maximum braking and then drive carefully around the animal at low speed if there is space. If a crash is imminent, keep eyes and head up to improve chances of keeping the bike up. Riders are encouraged to wear helmets and other high visibility protective gear to prevent injury or death in a crash.
- Don't count on deer whistles or deer fences to deter deer from crossing roads.
- Watch for the reflection of deer eyes and for deer silhouettes on the shoulder of the road. If anything looks slightly suspicious, slow down.
- Slowdown in areas known to have a large deer population — such as areas where roads divide agricultural fields from forest land, and whenever in forested areas between dusk and dawn.
- Deer do unpredictable things — they stop in the middle of the road when crossing; cross and quickly re-cross back; and move toward an approaching vehicle. Blow horn to urge deer to leave the road. Stop if the deer stays on the road, don't try to go around it.

If a deer is struck but not killed by a vehicle, keep a distance as deer may recover and move on.

If a deer does not move on, or poses a public safety risk, report the incident to a DNR conservation officer or other local law enforcement agency.

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Revision #1

Created 2023-12-19 19:06:17 UTC by Alicia Mohart

Updated 2023-12-19 19:07:03 UTC by Alicia Mohart