



Deer-Motor Vehicle Crash Safety Tips

The Highway Safety Research Center offers some tips for lowering your risk of a crash with a deer.

Animal-vehicle accidents can happen at any time of the year. But they are most likely to happen in the fall, especially deer-vehicle accidents. Hunting season, combined with the oncoming mating season, makes them restless and they roam of their natural territory.

No foolproof method has been found to prevent deer from causing vehicle incidents, though some people believe deer whistles have helped them avoid collisions. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), however, says there is no scientific evidence to prove that whistles prevent deer from approaching cars or reduce the risk. So what can you do?

TIPS FOR AVOIDING UNPLANNED MEETINGS WITH DEER

- Stay focused on your surroundings, watching left and right and far in front of you. Slow down! In areas with a large deer population, or where there are deer warning signs, drivers should reduce their speed.
- At night watch for deer eyes reflecting in your headlights. Try to look far down the road and scan the roadsides, especially when driving through field edges, heavily wooded areas, or posted deer crossing areas. The sooner you see a deer on or approaching a road, the better your chances of avoiding a crash.
- At night, use high beam lights to illuminate the sides of the road, being especially careful around woods and water. If you spot one deer, there are probably others close by.
- Take extra precaution to be alert at sunrise and sunset when deer are often out feeding on the small green shoots on the shoulders of roadways.
- If you see a deer on the shoulder or in the roadway and you have time to avoid hitting it, reduce your speed, tap on your brakes to warn possible oncoming vehicles and blow your horn. Remember that deer travel in herds; when you see one, more

are likely to be in the area.

- Deer tend to fixate on headlights, so don't blink or flash them. It may cause the animal to move. If there are no following vehicles, brake and slow down as you pass deer herds.
- Always wear your seat belt! It's your best protection from injuries in the event of a crash. Often deer cause vehicles to swerve off the road or hit other vehicles.
- If it looks like contact with the deer can't be avoided, don't try to swerve to miss it. Try to maintain control of your vehicle and hit it. Call the police and report the accident.