

Drive
SAFE

Work
SAFE

Live
SAFE

SAFETY TIPS TO AVOID DEER-VEHICLE CRASHES

Deer-vehicle crashes peak in the autumn months, but Minnesota's large deer population makes them a safety hazard on the road all year long in both rural and urban areas. More than 20,000 deer-vehicle collisions are reported annually. Use the following driver safety tips to help 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 protective gear to prevent injury or death in a crash.
- Watch for the reflection of deer eyes and for deer silhouettes on the shoulder of the road. If anything looks slightly suspicious, slow down. Don't count on deer whistles or deer fences to deter deer from crossing roads.
- Slow down in typical deer-active areas such as 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.
- Any Minnesota resident may claim a road-killed animal by contacting a law enforcement officer. An authorization permit will be issued allowing the individual to lawfully possess the deer.
- 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.

Sources: Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety; Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.



MINNESOTA SAFETY COUNCIL

Making Minnesota a Safer Place to Live
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