

Road Facts

Sharing the Road with Deer

According to State Farm, for the sixth year in a row, West Virginia is the most likely state for a driver to hit a deer, with drivers in West Virginia having a 1 in 40 chance of hitting a deer over the next 12 months. November, which is hunting and mating season, is the most likely month that a motorist will hit a deer, with October and December being the second and third most likely months. State Farm Insurance reports that the average damage cost of deer-related collisions during the last half of 2011 and the first half of 2012 was \$3,305.

The Insurance Information Institute (I.I.I.) has published the following information that can help reduce your chances of being involved in a deer-related collision. The WV LTAP staff has compiled this information directly from the I.I.I. in the list below; we urge you to read through this information to help save vehicles, occupants, and deer.



- Deer are not just found on rural roads near wooded areas; many deer crashes occur on busy highways near cities.
- Deer are unpredictable, especially when faced with glaring headlights, blowing horns and fast-moving vehicles. They often dart into traffic.
- Deer often move in groups. If you see one, there are likely to be more in the vicinity.
- Drive with caution when moving through deer-related crossing zones, in areas known to have a large deer population and in areas where roads divide agricultural fields from forestland.
- Always wear your seatbelt. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reports that in a study of fatal animal crashes, 60 percent of people killed were not wearing a seatbelt. Sixty-five percent of people killed in animal related crashes while riding motorcycles were not wearing a helmet.
- When driving at night, use high beam headlights when there is no oncoming traffic. The high beams will better illuminate the eyes of any deer on or near the roadway.
- Be especially attentive from sunset to midnight and during the hours shortly before or after sunrise. These are the highest risk times for deer-vehicle collisions.
- Brake firmly when you notice a deer in or near your path, but stay in your lane. Many serious crashes occur when drivers swerve to avoid a deer and hit another vehicle or lose control of their cars.
- Do not rely on devices such as deer whistles, deer fences and reflectors to deter deer. These devices have not proven effective.

In the event you hit a deer with your vehicle, the I.I.I. suggests:

- ...Try to avoid going near or touching the animal. A frightened and wounded deer can hurt you or further injure itself.
- If the deer is blocking the roadway and poses a danger to other motorists, you should call the police immediately.