

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Living With Deer Series*

**Watch Out For Deer!: Most Deer-Vehicle Collisions Occur From October to December**

The Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Deer Task Force urges drivers to keep an eye out for deer this fall. Fall is the time of year when deer are on the move due to breeding season. It's also the time of year when days become shorter, darkness falls earlier and more cars are on the road when visibility is poor. All of these factors translate into increased deer-auto collisions. Indeed, nearly 50 percent of all accidents involving white-tailed deer occur between October and December, according to Chad Stewart, deer research biologist at the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR).

However, there are a number of tips drivers can follow to reduce their risk of a deer-vehicle collision:

**Be aware of time of day**

Deer are most active at dusk and dawn and may be moving across roadways during these times.

**Be vigilant**

When you drive, make a habit of watching from side to side, especially in areas of low visibility or where roadside shrubs or grasses are close to the road.

**Watch for group behavior**

Deer tend to travel in groups. If one deer crosses the road, watch for more to follow. Keep in mind that a deer crossing in front of you may double back.

**Observe deer crossings**

Always observe deer crossing warning signs. While some motorists tend to ignore these signs, they are there for a reason. When approaching a posted area, slow down and maintain a slower speed through these sites.

Signs may not always be present where deer may cross. Be aware of typical deer habitat such as wooded areas or natural grass fields, and remain particularly alert while traveling on roadways that pass through these kinds of conditions.

**Use high beams**

Use high beams at night when there is no on-coming traffic.

**Don't rely on devices**

No evidence shows that devices such as "deer whistles" actually work.

**Honk!**

If you see a deer on the road or making its way onto the road, honk the horn and slow down.

**Don't swerve!**

If at all possible, do not swerve to avoid a deer, but brake firmly and sound your horn. Deer are easily confused. If you swerve, deer may run into the vehicle rather than away from it. Swerving could mean driving into another vehicle or off the road.

**Always wear your seatbelt**

Most serious injuries occur when vehicle occupants are not properly restrained.

IDNR's Stewart said that even when practicing safe driving, sometimes hitting a deer is inevitable. Caution is also important after the fact.

"If you hit a deer, remain calm," he said. "Do not approach the deer unless you are sure it has expired. Despite their gentle nature, their hooves are sharp and powerful, and can be extremely dangerous."

If you hit a deer, call 9-1-1 if injuries are involved. If injuries are not involved, call the Bloomington Police Department at 339-4477 if in the City limits; call the Monroe County Sheriff at 349-2781 if the accident occurs in the County.

If you notice an injured deer in or near the roadway or to report a dead deer on a City street, please contact City of Bloomington Animal Care and Control at 349-3492. Call 825-5355 to report a dead deer on a County road.

For more information on deer and the Deer Task Force, please visit:

[www.bloomington.in.gov/deertaskforce](http://www.bloomington.in.gov/deertaskforce)

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