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Motorists encouraged to be on the lookout for deer

Vehicle-deer crashes can happen any day of the year on Kansas roadways. Across the state, 37% of all single-vehicle crashes in 2022 involved a collision with a deer. The Kansas Department of Transportation reports six people were killed and 575 people were injured in collisions with deer in 2022.

These crashes greatly increase from now until the end of the year because of deer breeding season, with November typically the peak time.

This is why KDOT, the Kansas Highway Patrol, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, AAA Kansas and the Kansas Turnpike Authority are joining to raise awareness and help decrease vehicle-deer crashes.

“If a deer enters the roadway in front of your car, it is best to hit the animal and not swerve to avoid it,” said KHP Captain Candice Breshears. “We find more serious crashes occur when you swerve to miss the deer, potentially losing control of your vehicle, leaving the road or veering into oncoming traffic.”

Roadway safety officials suggest drivers:

- Be especially watchful at dawn and dusk when deer are more active.
- If you see one deer, expect others, as deer seldom travel alone.
- Be alert and reduce speeds near wooded areas or green spaces and near water sources such as streams and ponds.
- Deer crossing signs show areas where high numbers of vehicle-deer collisions have occurred in the past; but they can happen on any roadway, including city streets.
- Do not swerve to avoid hitting a deer. Motorists could then veer into oncoming traffic, run off the road, hit objects or overturn.
- Use bright headlights when there is no oncoming traffic and scan for the reflective eyes of deer.

- If a collision occurs, move the vehicle to the roadway’s shoulder. Then, if possible, call law enforcement – KHP dispatch at *47, the Kansas Turnpike at *KTA or local law enforcement at 911.
- Put the vehicle’s hazard lights on, whether it is light or dark outside.
- Remain in the vehicle with your seat belt fastened to be better protected.
- Contact your insurance company to report any vehicle damage.

Shawn Steward, Public and Government Affairs Manager for AAA Kansas, said deer can be unpredictable, so even the best drivers are at risk.

“In addition to the inconvenience of your vehicle damage, the cost of repairs may put a serious dent in your wallet,” Steward said. “AAA insurance statistics indicate that the average claim in Kansas for an animal strike in 2022 was almost \$7,000 – up more than 60% in just five years.”

Anyone involved in a collision with a deer or other animal resulting in personal injury or property damage totaling \$1,000 or more is required to immediately report the incident to the nearest law enforcement agency.

Nadia Marji, Chief of Public Affairs and Engagement Officer for KDWP, said a common question to the agency is if a hunting license is needed to personally take a deer carcass from a crash scene.

“KDWP has a process in place for this through salvage tags,” Marji said. “A salvage tag is required to remove all or part of a deer carcass from an accident site and can be issued by a KDWP game warden, KHP trooper or sheriff’s deputy.”

Increase roadway safety this fall and throughout the year by staying alert, obeying posted laws and eliminating distractions while driving. Always wear a seat belt and use appropriate child safety seats, every trip, every time.

NOTE: Click this link, [STWD Deer Accs by County 2022.pdf \(ksdot.gov\)](#), to view the vehicle-deer statistics by county for 2022, with the statewide stats at the bottom of the file.

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