

Beep, Beep! Don't Let a Deer Hit Your Car, Van, or Jeep.

Vehicle collisions with animals are a common occurrence, and the majority of damage results from accidents with deer. In addition to the cost, it's an inconvenience to your facility while the vehicle is in the repair shop. Needless to say, the cost and impact of bodily injury or the death of drivers and passengers can be devastating to a facility.

Safe driving procedures and training should include how to react when an animal runs into a driver's path. The Michigan Deer Crash Coalition offers the following recommendations to reduce your chances of a crash:

- Stay aware, awake, and sober.
- Remember that vehicle-deer crashes occur year-round, but be alert especially in the spring and fall, and at dusk and dawn.
- Pay attention to deer crossing and speed limit signs. They alert you of known deer-crossing areas.
- Deer are herd animals and frequently travel together. If you see one whitetail cross the road, chances are there will be more.
- Remember to always wear a safety belt. It is the best defense against injury in any crash.

If a crash is unavoidable:

- Don't swerve. Brake firmly, stay in your lane, hold onto the steering wheel, and bring your vehicle to a controlled stop.
- Pull off the road and turn on your emergency flashers.
- If you leave your vehicle, be cautious of other traffic.
- Don't attempt to remove a deer from the roadway, unless you are convinced it is dead. An injured deer's sharp hooves can hurt you easily.
- Report the crash to the police and your insurance agent. Car-deer crashes are typically covered under the comprehensive portion of the insurance policy.
- Police or Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conservation officers may issue a permit, if you want to keep the deer.

The Insurance Information Institute offers some additional tips:

- Drive with caution in areas known to have a large deer population and where roads divide agricultural fields from forestland.
- At night, use high beam headlights when there is no oncoming traffic. High beams will better illuminate the eyes of deer on or near the road.
- Slow down, and blow your horn with one long blast to frighten the deer away.
- Do not rely on devices such as deer whistles, deer fences, and reflectors to deter deer. These devices have not been proven to reduce deer-vehicle collisions.

To learn more about preventing accidents with deer, visit the Insurance Information Institute or Insurance Institute of Michigan website.