

# Caution: Deer Crossing!

The dramatic growth in the deer population, combined with a decrease in wild areas, has led to an increase in deer-vehicle crashes. It is important to be aware of the seriousness of these collisions and ways to keep yourself safe.

## Deer Collisions are Costly

- Nationally, there are approximately 500,000 animal-related vehicle crashes resulting in 100 deaths and 10,000 injuries annually.
- There were 24,590 deer-vehicle crashes in Ohio in 2008. These crashes resulted in 6 motorist fatalities and 979 injuries to vehicle occupants.
- **Richland County had the 2nd highest number of deer-vehicle crashes in Ohio with 592 collisions in 2008.**
- Nearly half of all deer-vehicle collisions occur between October and December when breeding season peaks and deer movement increases.
- Deer-vehicle crashes average more than \$2000 per claim. 67% of these collisions happen not in rural areas but on state routes.



## Avoiding Deer -Vehicle Collisions

- Watch for Deer Crossing warning signs and drive with particular caution in these areas. Deer Crossing signs are erected in areas that are, or once were, migratory crossings routes for deer.
- Deer travel in groups. If you see one, be aware that others may follow.
- Most crashes involving deer occur at dawn and dusk. Be especially cautious for deer during those times.
- Use your high beams when there is no oncoming traffic to help illuminate deer's eyes. Be aware that high beams often confuse deer and may cause them to freeze in a roadway. Turn your high beams off if you spot a deer in the roadway.
- If you see a deer, slow down and blow your horn in one long blast to frighten deer away.
- Don't swerve to avoid hitting a deer. Brake firmly and maintain control of your vehicle.
- Always wear your safety belt. Always drive defensively and at a safe speed. Slow down on country roads.

## If you hit a deer . . .

Do not attempt to move an injured animal. Call 9-1-1 immediately to report the collision. If your vehicle or the animal is in the roadway and may present a hazard to other drivers, set out reflective triangles or attempt to alert approaching traffic to the danger.

If you hit a deer and cause its death, you make take possession of the deer as long as you report the collision to a game protector or law enforcement officer within 24 hours. The protector or officer will then investigate and issue a certificate entitling you to the carcass. It is illegal to take a deer carcass without reporting it.



A message from:  
**Richland County Safe Communities Coalition**

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