



October, November and December Are Most Dangerous for Deer-related Crashes

Advice for North Carolina Drivers: Slow Down, Buckle Up and Look Out for Deer

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (Oct. 9, 2013) — Motor vehicle crashes involving deer historically peak during the fall months in North Carolina, and the state's most recent crash data shows no exception to that rule. In 2012, more than half of all deer-related crashes in North Carolina occurred in the months of October, November and December.

"Deer on or near the roadways is a major concern for motorists in North Carolina at this time of year," said David Harkey, director of the UNC Highway Safety Research Center (HSRC). "A crash can happen at any time, but drivers should be particularly careful in the early morning and early evening hours. More than 80 percent of deer-related crashes in 2012 occurred between 6 p.m. and 8 a.m."

Further analysis of deer-motor vehicle crash data show that, while the number of deer-related crashes dropped slightly in 2012 compared to 2011, the total number of deer-related crashes statewide in 2012 still neared 20,000. There were 19,988 crashes in 2012, compared to 20,313 in 2011. In that same period, the percent of total crashes that were deer-related also dropped from 9.74 percent to 9.36 percent.

A county-by-county comparison of the data shows that Wake County continues to have the highest number of reported deer-related crashes, with 1,086 in 2012. Other counties with high incidences of deer crashes in 2012 include Guilford (712), Pitt (601), Duplin (560) Mecklenburg (513) and Johnston (492) counties.

HSRC offers the following tips for lowering the risk of a crash with a deer:

- Slow down. In areas with a large deer population, or where there are deer warning signs, drivers should reduce their speed.
- Always wear a seat belt. It offers the best protection from injuries in the event of a crash.
- Watch for eyes reflecting from headlights. Try to look far down the road and scan the roadsides, especially when driving through field edges, heavily wooded areas or posted deer crossing areas. The sooner you see a deer on or approaching a road, the better the chances of avoiding a crash.
- Remember that deer travel in herds. If one deer crosses the road in front of you, don't assume that all is clear. Deer herds can be fairly large, and the animals often move one right behind the other.

- Do not place confidence in "deer whistles" or other "ultra-sonic" devices that claim to prevent deer collisions.
- Maintain control of your vehicle. It is important to not lose control of your vehicle or veer into the path of an oncoming vehicle to avoid contact with an animal. Loss of control usually results in a more serious crash.

If you are in a crash with a deer, or any large animal, the North Carolina Highway Patrol advises drivers to not put themselves in further danger by attempting to remove the animal carcass.

"Motorists should treat a deer-related crash like any other crash," said Sgt. Derek Mobley. "Pull over to a safe location, off the roadway, and dial 911 or *HP for help."

About UNC Highway Safety Research Center

The mission of the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center (HSRC) is to improve the safety, sustainability and efficiency of all surface transportation modes through a balanced, interdisciplinary program of research, evaluation, and information dissemination. For more than 45 years, HSRC has been a leading research institute that has helped shape the field of transportation safety. For more information, visit www.hsrc.unc.edu.

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