

Tips to reduce collisions with deer for commercial vehicle drivers.

“Deer hits” is a term our truck claim personnel have developed for describing an accident involving a truck hitting a deer. While deer hits are typically minor in nature, they do cause drivers time and headaches while waiting for repairs to be made. In some cases, deer-related accidents result in severe accidents such as rollovers when the driver swerves to miss the deer.

Deer hit season.

While deer hits occur throughout the year, they are most prevalent in the fall and early winter. According to a multiyear Highway Loss Data Institute Study¹, the frequency of deer accidents increases substantially from October through December. November is the peak month with nearly three times the average number of accidents. This time of year results in more accidents due to:

1. The fall deer breeding season — deer are less focused on dangers.
2. Deer hunting season — deer are pushed out of their normal protected areas.
3. Harvesting of crops — deer are required to travel across more roadways to find food.

Top deer accident regions.

Deer collisions can occur in any state but the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest regions have the highest frequency. In Michigan alone there were 50,949 vehicle-deer crashes in 2017!²

Preventing deer hits.

- **Use additional caution** during the fall, when deer hits are most frequent, especially in the regions identified above.
- **During “deer hit season” consider traveling on highways and freeways** with larger ditches to increase your ability to see deer and deer fences to restrict deer access.
- **Watch for deer during dawn and dusk** when they are most likely to be moving and feeding.



There are 3.5 times as many animal collisions in November as there are in August¹

¹ Highway Loss Data Institute Bulletin, Losses Due to Animal Strikes, Vol. 34, No. 9: April 2017

² Michigan State Police, Criminal Justice Information Center, Crash Statistics Number of Crashes Report Statewide Totals for 1/1/2017 through 12/31/17, March 26, 2018

- **Watch for deer crossing signs and dead deer** alongside the road, indicating high deer travel areas.
- **Turn your lights on early.** Deer eyes reflect in headlights, allowing you to see them sooner.
- **If you see one deer, watch for others.** Most deer travel in groups and are likely to follow one another across a roadway.
- **Slow down** so you can better react to a deer jumping onto the roadway.
- **Increase your following distance** to compensate for a driver in front of you braking when a deer is spotted.
- **Do not swerve to avoid a deer hit.** Swerving results in collisions with other vehicles and rollovers. Brake firmly when you see a deer in your path, but stay in your lane.



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