

With the approach of autumn, we can look forward to crisper days and shorter nights. Motorists can expect more encounters with deer, and unfortunately, the higher possibility of a deer-vehicle collision. This time of year, deer tend to broaden their foraging range, often migrating from one foraging range to another during the early winter, exposing themselves to risks such as rural roads and highways. Shorter daylight hours also contribute to deer-vehicle collisions as deer are more active at dawn and dusk.

The Federal Highway Administration maintains that deer-vehicle collisions are a national problem, resulting in more than \$1 billion in property damage and more than 200 human deaths per year<sup>1</sup>. The National Safety Council reports that there were over 530,000 animal-related collisions in 2003<sup>2</sup>.

According to State Farm Insurance Company's annual claim statistics, the states with the highest number of accidents involving deer between July 1, 2005 and June 30, 2006 were:<sup>3</sup>

1. Pennsylvania
2. Michigan
3. Illinois
4. Ohio
5. Georgia
6. Virginia
7. Minnesota
8. Texas
9. Indiana
10. South Carolina

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation offers drivers the following safety tips to avoid vehicle-deer collisions:<sup>4</sup>

- Be vigilant near dawn and dusk, the most active time for deer.
- Heed deer crossing and speed limit signs.
- Always wear your safety belt; it reduces your chances of being injured if you hit a deer.
- If you see a deer by the side of the road, slow down and blow your horn in one long blast to frighten it away.
- When you see one deer, look for another; they seldom run alone.
- If a deer looms in your headlights, don't expect it to move away. Headlights can confuse a deer and cause it to freeze.



- Brake firmly when you see a deer in or near your path.
- Do not swerve. Swerving can confuse the deer and cause you to lose control and hit a tree or another vehicle.
- If you hit a deer, stay in your vehicle. Do not get out and touch the animal. An injured deer can hurt you or itself.
- Walking or stopping on the highway is dangerous – you could be hit by an oncoming vehicle.
- Get your car off the road if possible and call law enforcement.

## Contact Information

For additional information please contact:

Bob Lombard  
Sr. Vice President & Regional Director  
Willis Pooling Practice  
1755 E. Plumb Lane, Suite #269  
Reno, NV 89502  
775 323 1656 ext. 19 (Office)  
775 858 6335 (Cell)  
lombard\_bj@willis.com

- 
- 1 Jerome W. Hall, Elizabeth W. Rutman, James D. Brogan "Highway Safety Challenges on Low-Volume Rural Roads," referenced in [www.safety.fhwa.dot.gov/rsa/library/item218.pdf](http://www.safety.fhwa.dot.gov/rsa/library/item218.pdf)
  - 2 National Safety Council, "Injury Facts, 2004 Edition," [www.nsc.org/product/samplechapters/if/injuryfactspreview.pdf](http://www.nsc.org/product/samplechapters/if/injuryfactspreview.pdf)
  - 3 State Farm Insurance, "Deer-Vehicle Collisions on the Rise State Farm® Reports 6% Increase in Claims," [http://www.statefarm.com/about/media/media\\_releases/deer.asp](http://www.statefarm.com/about/media/media_releases/deer.asp)
  - 4 Wisconsin Department of Transportation, "Wisconsin Traffic Safety Reporter, Vol. 8 No. 1, pg. 3," <http://www.dot.wi.gov/library/publications/format/newsletters/safety/tsr-vol8no1.pdf>

*The information in this bulletin is designed to assist you in your risk control efforts. It is not meant to provide legal guidance and in no way guarantees fulfillment of your obligations as may be required by local, state or federal requirements. Readers should not act without further inquiry and/or consultation with legal counsel.*