



Press Release

Greene County Combined Health District
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Tips to avoid hitting deer on the road - Stay safe during deer season

Deer breeding season runs from October through January.

(Xenia, OH) – During the day or at night, encountering a deer while you're on the road can be dangerous and scary. Deer season is upon us and the Greene County Safe Communities Coalition would like to remind you that your safety on Greene County roadways is a top priority. According to the Ohio Department of Public Safety, deer-related crash statistics show that there has been only one fatality over the last 5 years due to a deer strike (2008), but there have been a total of 1,461 deer-related crashes with at least 62 people injured as a result. These numbers may differ slightly due to the fact that many deer strikes go unreported.

What can you do to stay safe during deer season? Knowing what to do when you encounter a large animal on or near the roadway can be a life-saver. Here are some tips:

- Deer are most often along the road side near dawn, around 7 a.m., and again at dusk, approximately 7:30 p.m.
- Deer breeding season runs from October through early January, and during this time they are highly active and on the move.
- Though deer may wander into suburban neighborhoods, they are most frequently found on the outskirts of town and in heavily wooded areas.
- As pack animals, deer almost never travel alone. If you see one deer, you can bet that there are others nearby.

Preventive Techniques

- To avoid a deer-vehicle collision, slow down. If you are driving through an area known for high deer populations, slow down and observe the speed limit. The more conservative you are with your speed, the more time you will have to brake if an animal darts into your path.
- Always wear a seatbelt. The most severe injuries in deer-vehicle collisions usually result from failure to use a seatbelt.
- Watch for the shine of eyes along the roadside and immediately begin to slow.
- Use your high beams whenever the road is free of oncoming traffic. This will increase your visibility and give you more time to react.

- Deer can become mesmerized by steady, bright lights so if you see one frozen on the road, slow down and flash your lights. Some experts recommend one long blast of the horn to scare them out of the road, as well.
- Pay close attention to caution signs indicating deer or other large animals. These signs are specifically placed in high-traffic areas where road crossings are frequent.
- If you're on a multi-lane road, drive in the center lane to give as much space to grazing deer as possible.

Encountering a Deer

- Never swerve to avoid a deer in the road. Swerving can confuse the deer on where to run. Swerving can also cause a head-on collision with oncoming vehicles, take you off the roadway into a tree or a ditch, and greatly increase the chances of serious injuries.
- Deer are unpredictable creatures, and one that is calmly standing by the side of the road may suddenly leap into the roadway without warning. Slowing down when you spot a deer is the best way to avoid a collision. However, if one does move into your path, maintain control and do your best to brake and give the deer time to get out of your way.
- Don't rely on hood whistles or other devices designed to scare off deer. These have not been proven to work.
- If you do collide with a deer (or large animal), call emergency services if injuries are involved, or the local police if no one is injured, but damage has been caused to your property or someone else's. Never touch an animal that is in the roadway. Report the incident to your insurance company as soon as possible.

Keeping calm and driving smart improve your chances of avoiding a collision and staying safe on the road. These tips have been provided by Dawn McCaslin, www.geico.com. For more information on the Greene County Safe Communities Coalition, call Laurie Fox at 937-374-5669 or email her at lfox@gcchd.org.

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