



## AVOIDING DEER STRIKES

### *The Rut*

Good luck in the woods, bad luck on the roads. That's the story for many hunters in deer season. Hunters are not alone: animal collisions account for 36% of all comprehensive insurance claims filed in the fall months. That's an increase of 67% compared to the summer months.

Deer are typically most active at dusk and dawn. When breeding season is in full swing, it's time to use extra caution out there. As the peak of rut draws near, male deer are overtaken by their hormones and engage in "chasing" behavior. A doe in retreat or a buck on the chase pay little attention to anything but one another, and this means that they may be completely unaware of nearby motor vehicles.

Deer strikes are costly, and not just in terms of time. They are comparable to a minor motor vehicle collision, with the average repair cost between \$3,000 and \$4,500.

## Avoiding Deer Strikes

### Risk Management

#### *Deer collision avoidance*

**Slow down:** If given an opportunity, a deer will shift its focus off other deer and will usually get out of the way. Drive slower than usual, especially at night or near dawn or dusk, and on winding, hilly suburban and rural roads.

**Shine ahead:** When possible, use your high beams and scan road sides for glowing eyes or movement. Don't hesitate to tap the breaks lightly or slow down if something doesn't look right.

**Pass with care:** Deer standing on the side of the road may run in any direction, including in front of your vehicle. Don't expect them to run away if you honk your horn. Slow down and proceed with caution.

**Expect more:** If a deer darts across the road in front of you, stop or slow down and watch carefully as you proceed. Another deer – or many more – will likely follow.

**Don't rely on whistles:** While some people swear by them, the effectiveness of mounted deer whistles is unclear. A University of Georgia study concluded that they are "not an appropriate measure" for avoiding deer collisions.

**Don't swerve:** Swerving only increases the chance of a collision or going off the road. Slow down as best you can. Brace for an impact and do your best to stay in your lane and remain calm.

**If you hit a deer:** Pull off the road, use your flashing hazard lights and call the non-emergency number for state troopers, game wardens, or police. If someone is hurt, dial 911.

**Stay in your car:** Public safety officers advise you to stay in your vehicle, especially on a highway or heavy traffic. Leave the deer alone.

Though deer are much more active in the months of October through December, they can dart from the side of the road at any time of the year. Always use caution near wooded areas and always wear your seatbelt.

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## Risk Management

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