Drivers Must Be Aware of the Dangers Deer Pose

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According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT), "deer are the third most commonly struck object in Wisconsin."1

However, the deer are not the only ones suffering in these collisions. In 2010 deer related accidents resulted in 14 deaths, 65 incapacitating injuries, and many more less severe injuries.2 The reported 403 injured people in 2010 comprise the 4th lowest annual total in the last 30 years.3 However, May and June of 2010 totaled 2,726 crashes, and formed a secondary peak of reported incidents to those occurring during the fall.4 These statistics are based on crashes reported by the police, but many more deer carcasses are taken off the roads suggesting that actual collisions are much higher than reported.5 While this could mean that most collisions do not result in serious personal injury, the deer also pose a significant threat to the vehicle.

The following safety tips offered by the Wisconsin DOT address both how to prevent collisions with deer and what to do should you hit one.6

=> Be aware of the time and remember that you are more likely to encounter a deer in the early morning and evening hours.

=> Eliminate distractions while driving and look out for deer, particularly, the glowing eyes on the side of the road.

=> Always wear a safety belt; crashes where safety belts were worn resulted in less severe injuries.

=> If you do see a deer by the side of the road, slow down and blow your horn once for a long blast to frighten the animal away.

=> Remember, if you see one deer, more are likely around.

=> If you see a deer in your headlights, donâ€™t expect it to move, headlights can confuse the animal and cause it to freeze.

=> Do not swerve; not only does swerving increase your risk of hitting another vehicle or an object, but it will also confuse the deer and the animal will not know where to run.

=> Motorcyclists however are encouraged to swerve when absolutely necessary to avoid a collision after taking every precaution and avoiding the oncoming lane.

=> If you do hit a deer, try to get your vehicle off the road and call the police; do not walk toward the animal, walking on the road is dangerous to you, and other drivers. If the animal is not dead, it can hurt you or itself trying to get up.

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