



State of Illinois
JB Pritzker, Governor



Illinois Department of Transportation
Omer Osman, Secretary

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Deer prudence: Avoid the urge to swerve during their mating season

Illinois entering peak time of year for crashes involving deer

SPRINGFIELD – Fall in Illinois includes high school football, spectacular scenery as the leaves change colors and... the arrival of deer mating season. The Illinois Department of Transportation and Illinois Department of Natural Resources are reminding motorists to be alert for deer, which are entering their peak active season, especially at dawn and dusk now through December.

“While your natural instinct is to steer quickly out of the way when you see a deer, remember to not veer suddenly because you could lose control of your vehicle and swerve into another lane or off the road,” **said Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman**. “Always prepare for the unexpected. A deer might stop in the middle of the road or double back. They also frequently travel in groups so when you see one there likely are others nearby.”

In 2022, there were 14,524 crashes involving deer in Illinois. Of those, 13,892 resulted in damage to property or vehicles, while 629 caused injuries. Four of the crashes resulted in fatalities.

Although a collision with a deer can happen any time, Illinois is approaching the time of year when the most crashes with them occur. Last year, more than 40% of crashes involving deer in Illinois occurred in October, November and December, with November being the highest-risk month. Rural areas were the site of more than 70% of crashes involving deer, with most occurring at twilight or nighttime.

Safe driving tips for deer-mating season:

- Be aware of your surroundings, especially in areas with deer crossing signs.
- Scan the sides of the road for eye shine – the reflection of headlights in their eyes.
- Slow down if you see a deer and anticipate others could be following.

- Prepare for the unexpected. Deer may stop in the middle of the road and not move for oncoming vehicles.
- If a collision is inevitable, don't veer. Try to glance your vehicle off the deer and avoid swerving into the opposite lanes of traffic or off the road.

Deer can often appear suddenly in some surprising environments, so be on alert, slow down and pay attention in areas where they are known to travel.

The top 10 Illinois counties for crashes involving deer in 2022:

1. Cook	542
2. Madison	396
3. McHenry	351
4. Lake	350
5. Will	344
6. Peoria	323
7. Fulton	313
8. Kane	286
9. Sangamon	282
10. Macoupin	271

“Deer are a part of the Illinois landscape, and drivers should be mindful of their presence,” **said Illinois Department of Natural Resources Director Natalie Phelps Finnie.** “Drive cautiously this time of year, especially at dawn and dusk, when deer are particularly active for the fall mating season.”

If you hit a deer, pull off to the shoulder, turn on your hazard lights and call 911. Do not exit the vehicle to check on an injured deer or pull it from the road.

For information on how to claim a deer involved in a crash, or to report possession of a deer killed in a crash, click [here](#) or visit the IDNR [website](#).

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