

How to stay safe during vehicle-deer crash season: Know the facts

Stay alert! These crashes happen most frequently now-December, plus tips for staying safe

There were 5,958 vehicle-deer crashes in Southeast Michigan in 2018, a slight increase from 2017 when there were 5,583 crashes (increase of 375 or 6.7%), according to data released by SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, based on crash data received from the Michigan Department of State Police Criminal Justice Information Center.

"For many in our region, hunting season is an exciting time of year," said Kathleen Lomako, Executive Director of SEMCOG. "These statistics are a great reminder for each driver to be as alert behind the wheel as a hunter is in a tree stand."

Here is some additional information about vehicle-deer crashes in Southeast Michigan:

- While deer or other animal-related crashes represent only four percent of traffic crashes in Southeast Michigan, these crashes represent 17 percent of crashes statewide.
- While deer crashes did result in one fatality and eight serious injuries in 2018, almost 97 percent of deer-involved crashes resulted in property damage only.
- Deer-related crashes may present specific safety challenges when motorcycles are involved, as 60 percent of motorcyclists involved in a deer crash suffered some type of injury.
- Deer crashes occur most frequently during October-December; 47 percent of all 2018 vehicle-deer crashes occurred during those months.

These charts show the top 10 communities for vehicle-deer crashes in Southeast Michigan, and vehicle-deer crashes by county in 2018.

Top 10 Communities	2018	County	2018
Rochester Hills	151	Oakland	1,851
Scio Twp	132	Washtenaw	1,003
Farmington Hills	119	St. Clair	851
Oakland Twp	103	Livingston	842
Independence Twp	98	Macomb	585
Washington Twp	89	Monroe	413
Superior Twp	89	Wayne	413
West Bloomfield Twp	87	SEMCOG Total	5,958
Oxford Twp	86	Statewide	53,464
Novi	82		

Tips for all drivers

Please share these statistics and safety tips:

- Stay aware, alert, and sober.
- Buckle up. Safety belts are the best defense in any collision.
- Be alert for deer in October, November, and December, especially at dawn and dusk.
- Slow down. Heed deer crossing and speed limit signs, particularly on two-lane roads. Note that deer frequently travel in groups. If you see one deer crossing or standing alongside the road, chances are there are others nearby that you might not see.

- Don't veer for deer! If a crash is unavoidable, don't swerve out of your lane to avoid deer. Instead, brake firmly while securely gripping the steering wheel to bring the vehicle to a controlled stop. Then, safely steer your vehicle off to the side of the road.
- It's generally safer to hit the deer than run off the road or risk injuring another motorist.

SEMCOG's interactive Crash Locations map allows users to customize vehicle-deer crash information. Link to it [here](#).