

## NEWS RELEASE

Kansas Department of Transportation news release

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Drivers beware: deer on move

## *Kansas deer-vehicle collisions peak in November*

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), the Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP) and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) are warning motorists to be aware that November is historically the month when the highest number of deer-vehicle crashes occur.

According to KDWP biologist, Lloyd Fox, the increase in deer-vehicle crashes is strongly influenced by deer mating season (the “rut”), which occurs in the fall and peaks during mid-November. Deer frequently travel more during this season and are less cautious about hazards such as vehicles. Also at this time of year, deer shift their core movement area as crops are harvested and trees and shrubs become bare, making the animals less secure in the areas they used during the summer.

Not only are deer more active during the fall, the shorter days mean they are on the move during peak travel times, which occur in the low-light of dawn and dusk when they are difficult to see.

According to KDOT, there were 9,628 deer-vehicle collisions in 2009. Sedgwick County had the most crashes with 395, followed by Johnson County with 353 and Butler County with 286.

*(The five-year crash totals, as well as the 2009 county breakdown of crashes, are attached.)*

Motorists should observe the following tips to avoid colliding with deer:

- Be especially watchful at dawn and dusk when deer are most active;
- Deer seldom travel alone. If one crosses a road, there may be others following;
- Reduce speed and be alert near wooded areas or green spaces such as parks or golf courses, and near water sources such as streams or ponds;
- Don't swerve to avoid a collision with a deer. The most serious crashes happen when motorists take evasive action;
- Heed deer crossing sign warnings;
- Use bright lights and slow down when deer are spotted.

According to KHP Capt. Art Wilburn, if you hit a deer, pull onto the shoulder, turn on emergency flashers, and, if you must leave your vehicle, watch for traffic. Don't remove a deer from the roadway unless you are certain it is dead; an injured deer can hurt you. To report a crash on a Kansas highway using a cell phone, press \*47 (\*HP) for a highway patrol dispatcher or \*582 (\*KTA) for assistance on the Kansas Turnpike, or dial 911.

If a crash results in personal injury or property damage of \$1,000 or more, the driver is required to immediately report it to the nearest law enforcement agency. Failure to report any traffic crash is a misdemeanor and may result in suspension of driving privileges.

If you are involved in a non-injury crash on an interstate, U.S. highway, or any divided or multi-lane road in Kansas, and aren't transporting hazardous materials, you are required by law to move your vehicle out of the lane of traffic. The best way to prevent

serious injuries and death in a crash is to make sure all occupants are buckled up and children are secured in an appropriate child safety seat.

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For information about obtaining an alternative format, contact the Bureau of Transportation Information, 700 SW Harrison St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl West, Topeka, KS 66603-3754 or phone 785-296-3585 (Voice)/Hearing Impaired – 711.