



October 11, 2017
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Lori Conarton, Insurance Alliance of Michigan, 517/371-2880 or 517/243-1021 cell

October, November and December Are Dangerous Months For Deer/Vehicle Crashes

(LANSING, MI) — As we enter the three most dangerous months for deer/vehicle crashes October, November and December, motorists should be aware that these crashes can cause more than just damage to the vehicle. Deer/vehicle crashes resulted in 1,240 injuries and 14 deaths last year. Nine of the fatalities were motorcyclists.

In the Great Lakes State, there is an average of 128 deer/vehicle crashes each day. Although reported deer/vehicle crashes in Michigan declined in 2016 to 46,870 from the 47,001 crashes reported in 2015, many crashes also go unreported, so actual crash numbers are much higher.

In 2016, Oakland County had the most deer/vehicle crashes with 1,847 crashes. The remaining top nine were Kent (1,481), Lapeer (1,308), Jackson (1,254), Sanilac (1,119), Ottawa (1,116), Ingham (1,096), Calhoun (1,056), Genesee (1,000), Eaton (998) and Isabella (980).

All motorists should ‘think deer’ whenever they are behind the wheel, and drive defensively, as if a deer can appear at any moment, because they can!

Safety experts say motorists can help avoid dangerous encounters with deer.

“Deer crashes can happen to any driver,” said Conarton. “Your best defense is to look out for deer, especially at sunrise and sunset, and always wear your safety belt. Don’t swerve to avoid a deer because too often you’ll end up hitting something more dangerous like a tree or another vehicle.”

The state has a 1.75 million-strong deer herd. Deer frequently travel in groups. If you see one deer cross the road, chances are there are more nearby.

The Michigan Deer Crash Coalition recommends the following safety tips:

- Watch for deer especially at dawn and dusk. They are most active then, especially during the fall mating season. In spring, deer will move from cover to find food, and back to cover. Often, deer will feed along road rights-of-way, where grass greens up first. If you see one deer, approach cautiously, as there may be more out of sight.
- Deer often travel single file, so if you see one cross a road, chances are more are nearby waiting to cross, too. When startled by an approaching vehicle, they can panic and dart out from any direction without warning.
- Be alert all year long, especially on two-lane roads. Watch for deer warning signs. They are placed at known deer-crossing areas and serve as a first alert that deer may be near.
- Slow down when traveling through deer-population areas.
- Always wear your seat belt.
- If a crash with a deer is imminent, don't swerve, brake firmly, hold onto the steering wheel with both hands, come to a controlled stop and steer your vehicle well off the roadway

The MDCC – a broad affiliation of groups representing law enforcement, traffic safety, insurance, natural resources, higher education and strategic regional planning in the public and private sectors – seeks to increase awareness of the problem among the driving public and reduce the number of deaths and injuries occurring each year on state roads. Members are: AAA Michigan • Insurance Alliance of Michigan • Michigan Department of Natural Resources • Michigan Department of State • Michigan Department of Transportation • Michigan Sheriffs' Association • Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning • SEMCOG (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments) • State Farm Insurance and Traffic Improvement Association. For more information, visit the coalition's website, www.michigandeercrash.com

###