

Motorists and Pedestrians BE ON THE LOOK OUT! As the Fall Season Approaches, Deer and Pedestrian Crashes Increase



Over the past few years the Delaware State Police, while working with the Delaware Office of Highway Safety, Delaware Department of Transportation and AAA Mid-Atlantic, have sent out warnings to traveling motorists about the increase in deer

crossings during deer rut and hunting seasons, which occur predominantly in October and November in Delaware. When taking a deeper look at 2016 and 2017 deer-related crash statistics, it is very clear the results of tenacious proactive work and warnings are making a difference.

As you will see, there's been marked improvement up and down the state of Delaware with the reduction of deer crashes over the past two years. The deer-related crash data, including the pedestrian crash data shows the results by region, month and time of day that pinpoints our focus to better apply resources. Our energy and tactics will be concentrated on what the data tells us while creating greater public safety awareness and education on a continual basis. Warning our communities, families and our motorists about the hazards in both pedestrian and deer related crashes in a specific clear-cut and effective way will optimistically make a positive difference. Ultimately, with this information, we will continue to work for the safety of everyone in Delaware as we all become motorists and/or pedestrians at some point.





Here are the stats:

1. Last year's press release regarding deer crashes and how to avoid them showed in 2016 there were a total of 2,042 animal and deer-related crashes with 1,010 animal/deer crashes being investigated in Sussex, 441 in Kent and 591 in New Castle County. See below for a comparison of the same type of crashes in each county in 2017. Also, see how many of the 2017 crashes occurred between dusk and dawn.

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
Total # of <u>animal and deer</u> crashes	2,042	1,913
# of animal and deer crashes in NCCo	591	558
# of animal and deer crashes in Kent	441	409
# of animal and deer crashes in Sussex	1,010	946

(2017 Total Animal and Deer Crashes in Delaware that occurred from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. was a total of 1,355 and of that total 375 in NCC, 300 in Kent and 680 in Sussex)

2. Deer-related crash information from 2017 (excluded animal-related crashes), to include the totals in each county and how many were Personal Injury Crashes)

County	2017 Deer-Related Crashes	2017 Deer-Related Personal Injury
New Castle County	502	29
Kent County	377	10
Sussex County	893	25

Additionally, over the past few years Delaware has had an issue with pedestrians being struck by motor vehicles with the number of incidents increasing at the beginning of fall and continuing into the winter season. This is attributed to the longer periods of darkness during this time frame- our darker days.

County	2017 Total Pedestrian Crashes	2017 Personal Injury Pedestrian Crashes	2017 Pedestrian-Related Fatal Crashes
New Castle County	129	88	14
Kent County	35	20	4
Sussex County	36	18	8

Pedestrian-related crash information, to include the following: 2017 totals for personal injury and fatal crashes, that occurred from September 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017 and how many of the crashes occurred during the hours of 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. (low light hours).

County	Personal Injury Pedestrian Crashes from September to December 2017	Personal Injury Pedestrian Crashes Between 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.
New Castle County	31 of the 88	4
Kent County	8 of the 20	5
Sussex County	10 of the 18	3

Personal Injury Crash data by month and and time of day.

County	Pedestrian Fatal Crashes from September to December 2017	Pedestrian Fatal Crashes between 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.
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New Castle County	5	2
Kent County	1	1
Sussex County	6	4

Pedestrian Fatal Crashes data by month and time of day.



In an effort to properly address these issues, the Delaware State Police have chosen to combine these issues and combat them in a very strategic manner. First, DSP will continue to educate the public on these hazards and provide ways to lessen the related risks. We will also enforce the related laws, when appropriate. Additionally, the Delaware State Police, Office of Highway Safety (OHS) and Delaware Department of

Transportation (DelDOT) and the American Automobile Association (AAA Mid-Atlantic) will join forces and utilize our resources and make a positive impact on Delaware roadways.

For instance, OHS will provide assistance for enforcement efforts, while DelDOT provides message boards throughout the state to help warn motorists and pedestrians of the hazards. Lastly, DSP, DelDOT, OHS, and AAA Mid-Atlantic will continue to share the warnings and tips provided below by way of different media channels.

If MOTORISTS strictly follow these suggestions, they will significantly decrease their risk of being involved in a **deer-related**, or a **pedestrian-related crash**:

- Consider all roadways and not just back roads for deer crossings

- Consider slowing down during rut and hunting season (and the darker hours reference pedestrians)

- Never take your eyes off the roadway, especially during this vulnerable time of year

- Drive when you are alert and not when you are too tired to properly focus

- Do not drive a vehicle while impaired by illicit drugs, alcohol, or mind-

altering medications

- Stay focused on the task at hand, DRIVING, and do not take your eyes off

the road for even a split second

- Drive slower during deer rut, hunting and the darker (low light) times

- Be prepared for a deer to cross, or a pedestrian to be on the

shoulder on

any type of roadway, due to the fact that deer cross on highways too,

where traffic speeds are higher and deer eyes are more difficult to see

-Know Delaware's pedestrian-related laws and follow them and know what

to do if a pedestrian is approaching, or partially in a cross-walk

If PEDESTRIANS strictly follow these suggestions, they will significantly decrease their risk of being involved in a pedestrian-related crash:

-Follow all pedestrian laws, to include: walking while facing traffic, walking with a light, or reflective gear; crossing at crosswalks; and utilizing pedestrian-related signals. Research pedestrian laws online, if you are unfamiliar with them

-Do not walk on, or close to high-speed highways; Call 911 and get as far from high-speed traffic as you can, while waiting for assistance

-Do not walk on, or near a roadway, or highway, if you are under the influence of alcohol, or drugs, to include prescription medication that has mind-altering affects

"The statistics are clear that with shorter daylight hours, we see more vehicle crashes involving pedestrians and deer. Throughout the fall season, motorists will see message boards reminding them to use caution and drive safely. We want everyone, regardless of their mode of transportation, to get to their destination safely!"

Jennifer Cohan, Secretary of the Delaware Department of

Transportation

"The fall and winter months are the most dangerous times for pedestrians. With low daylight hours, it is important for both pedestrians and drivers to be alert on Delaware's roadways and share the responsibility to keep themselves and others on the road safe. OHS reminds all pedestrians to be visible, use crosswalks, and not to walk under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Drivers should be aware that pedestrians are often not where you would expect them. Drivers should be focused on the road at all times, slow down when pedestrians are present, and not drive under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol."

Kimberly Chesser, Acting Director Delaware Office of Highway Safety

"Whatever the reason, everyone is a pedestrian at some point, and everyone plays a role in keeping our roadways safe, look out for pedestrians at all times. When you are operating a vehicle, you have accepted a heightened responsibility for other people on the road. Safety is a two-way street. Often, pedestrians— especially younger ones— are not where they should be or where you would expect them to be. Remain vigilant at all times."

Ken Grant, Manager of Public and Government Affairs at AAA Mid-Atlantic.

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