Avoiding Deer/Vehicle Collisions, Fall/Winter

PLEASE BE ESPECIALLY ALERT WHEN DRIVING ON LOCAL ROADS AT THIS TIME OF YEAR; OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER ARE THE MONTHS WHEN DEER ARE MOST ACTIVE AND MOBILE.

The best way to avoid a collision with a deer, at any time of the year, is to drive slowly and carefully, giving you time to watch for deer activity and to slow down when necessary. By observing the following guidelines, you increase your chances of avoiding a collision:

1. **Heed the "leaping deer" signs** – Those signs are not random, but rather placed where a greater number of deer have been spotted crossing the road.
2. **Know when not to swerve** – **If you come upon a deer, you should slow down while staying in your lane**. Most accidents in which deer are involved are the result of a car swerving into another car or truck or into a tree. You can honk your horn in short bursts; this may warn the deer to get out of the road.
3. **Drive at a safe speed** – When there is a possibility that deer might be present, **slow down.** Cutting your speed by a few mph won't cost you too much time, and will certainly cost you less time than would a collision with a deer.
4. **Observe your surroundings** – If you have a passenger, ask him/her to be on the lookout for deer, or at night, any sign of the deer, such as the reflections from their eyes. If you are alone, do your best to scan the sides of the road without taking your attention away from your driving.
5. **Be especially wary at sunrise and sunset** – This is when deer are most active. And remember that **deer travel in groups much of the time.** So, after one deer crosses the road, don't speed up. Rather wait to make sure that there are no others following.
6. **Drive carefully at night** – This includes making sure your windshield is clear, your lights are on, that you drive at or below the speed limit, according to conditions, and are prepared to stop if necessary.
7. **Be alert even when inside neighborhoods** – The deer in this area know no boundaries. You have to be just as alert if you are driving in a residential area as when you are on country roads.
8. **Slow down when other cars are behaving differently** – If a driver flashes her/his lights when passing, waves, or tries to get your attention in some other way, be alert –it could be a warning that a deer, or some other impediment, is in the road.

To see where deer/vehicle collisions most often occur, click on the LMT Deer Incident Map link on the Citizens Traffic Commission webpage.

Happy trails and safe driving!