

Drivers: Be On the Lookout for Deer in the Roadways

With the days getting shorter and white-tail deer entering their annual rut, officials with the Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife are cautioning motorists to be especially alert while driving to avoid collisions with the animals.

While deer may cross roads at any time, they are most active during the dawn and dusk hours, said DEP wildlife officials.

"Once daylight-saving time ends, normal driver commuting times will more closely align with the peak deer activity," said Division of Fish and Wildlife Director David Chanda. "Commuters should remain especially alert and drive with particular caution as a result. Deer are unpredictable. They typically move in family groups and cross single-file. Drivers need to take extra caution to avoid collisions, as well as the possibility of serious injury."

Deer migrate and mate during the fall months. In many instances, deer will wander closer to roads and may literally stop in the middle of a road, cross over and then re-cross. If you spot a deer, slow down and pay attention to sudden movement. If the deer doesn't move, don't go around it. Wait until the road is clear. And if you spot one deer, be alert for others.

"It's critical for motorists to remain on high alert, since deer can

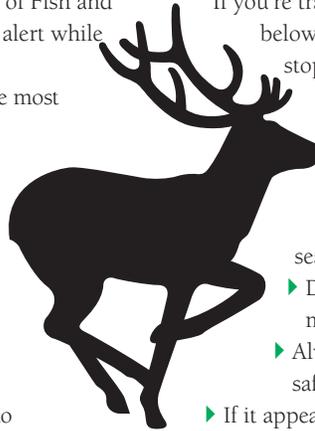
come out of nowhere, and unexpectedly dart in front of your vehicle," said Division of Highway Traffic Safety Director Pam Fischer. "If you're traveling in wooded areas or near open fields, slow down below the posted speed limit, so you'll have ample time to stop and allow deer to cross the roadway."

If you are traveling after dark, use high beams where there is no on-coming traffic. High beams will illuminate the eyes of deer on or near roads and provide better reaction time for a motorist.

DEP offers the following tips for driving during deer season:

- ▶ Don't tailgate. Remember: the driver in front of you might have to stop suddenly to avoid hitting a deer.
- ▶ Always wear a seat belt, as required by law. And drive at a safe, sensible speed for conditions.
- ▶ If it appears you are going to collide with a deer, don't swerve to avoid impact. The animal may counter-maneuver. Brake firmly, but stay in your lane. Fatalities are more likely when a driver swerves to avoid a deer and instead, collides with oncoming traffic or a permanent structure in the road.
- ▶ You should report any deer-vehicle collision to a local law enforcement agency immediately.

For more information about deer in New Jersey, visit the DEP's Fish and Wildlife Web site: www.njfishandwildlife.com.



Top Decorating Mistakes to Avoid this Holiday Season

Keep your holidays injury-free with these important safety tips

In addition to food, family, and gifts, decorations are one of the highlights of the holiday season. While candles, Christmas trees, and other decorations are part of the



holiday spirit, they can pose fire and poisoning hazards, especially to curious children.

"The holidays are a time for spending with family and friends, not rushing to the emergency room," says KJ Feury, Safe Kids Northern NJ coordinator. "Once all of your decorations are up, keeping a close eye on both children and the decorations themselves is an important step to a safe holiday season."

In 2005, candles started 15,600 home fires in the United States. According to the National Fire Protection Association, the top four days for candle fires are around Christmas and New Year's. Using battery-operated flameless candles is an alternative that does not pose a fire risk.

"Never, never leave lit candles unattended," says Feury. "Do not put candles on a

tree or a natural wreath, or near curtains or drapes, and keep matches and lighters locked out of children's reach. If you would like decorative lighting, make sure it is labeled with the seal of an independent testing lab, and only use it outdoors if it's labeled for outdoor use."

If you decorate a tree, avoid these top decorating mistakes:



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- * Decorate with children in mind. Do not put ornaments that have small parts or metal hooks, or look like food or candy, on the lower branches where small children can reach them. Trim protruding branches at or below a child's eye level, and keep lights out of reach.
- * Natural Christmas trees always involve some risk of fire. To minimize the risk, get a fresh tree and keep it watered at all times. Do not put the tree within three feet of a fireplace, space heater, radiator or heat vent.
- * Never leave a lit Christmas tree or other decorative lighting display unattended. Inspect lights for exposed or frayed wires, loose connections and broken sockets.
- * Do not overload extension cords or outlets and do not run an electrical cord under a rug.

* Do not burn Christmas tree branches, treated wood or wrapping paper in a home fireplace.

Top tips to prevent poisoning this holiday season:

- * Keep alcohol, including baking extracts, out of reach and do not leave alcoholic drinks unattended.
- * Color additives used in fireplace fires are a toxic product and should be stored out of reach. Artificial snow can be harmful if inhaled, so use it in a well-vented space.
- * Mistletoe berries, Holly Berry and Jerusalem Cherry can be poisonous. If they are used in decorating, make sure children and pets cannot reach it.
- * In a poison emergency, call the national Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222.

Thousands Injured in Furniture Accidents

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that between 2000 and 2006 there were at least 180 deaths related to tip-overs of furniture, televisions or appliances. Most of these deaths, 80 percent of them, involved children younger than 10. In 2007, the CPSC identified this issue as one of the top five hidden home hazards. "Kids can be seriously injured or killed as a result of climbing onto, falling against or pulling themselves up on shelves, bookcases, dressers, TV tables and other furniture," says KJ Feury RN, APN, Safe Kids Northern NJ coordinator.

CPSC data also shows that in 2006 there were 19,300 injuries associated with product instability or tip-overs involving children younger than 10. That number is almost half of all estimated instability and tip-over injuries during 2006. "If a piece of furniture is unstable or top-heavy, fasten it to a wall using brackets, screws or wall straps," says Feury. "Keep heavier items on lower shelves or in lower drawers. Don't keep remote controls, candy or other tempting items on unstable stands or tables. A child might be enticed to reach for the top and pull down the object, the stand or both," says KJ Feury.

Tie up loose cords, too — a child pull-

ing on an electrical cord, or tripping on one, could pull an appliance off a stand. Other steps everyone can take to protect children at home include teaching children not to climb or jump on furniture and pushing the TV as far back as possible from the front of its stand.

Kids are also in danger of suffocation if they become accidentally trapped in a cabinet, toy chest or laundry machine; in 2007 alone there were 3,270 injuries to children ages 2 to 14 involving toy chests. Always supervise children around any confined space and keep the doors closed and locked.

Toy chests that meet voluntary standards set by the CPSC are equipped with lid supports that hold the lid open in any position. The standards also call for ventilation holes to prevent suffocation. If you have a toy chest with a lid that doesn't stay open, the CPSC recommends you remove the lid or install a spring-loaded lid support.

"These are not hazards that kill thousands of children every year, like vehicle crashes or drowning, but they are so easy to prevent and the consequences can be so severe," says KJ Feury. "Don't underestimate the possibility of a small child being crushed by unsteady furniture."

Scrap Book



Together.... in the crosswalk!



Leigh Ann Von Hagan walking Wednesday coordinator takes some time with a student



This student is getting a driver's view.

Prevention Works is the official triennial newsletter of Northern NJ SAFE KIDS/Safe Communities.

We welcome articles of interest highlighting your community or organization.

Let us know how you have made your community a safe community.

If you have any comments or topics you would like to see covered, please feel free to contact

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