



Safety Corner

Lincoln County | October 2015



To SWERVE or NOT to SWERVE



That is the question. Before leaping to an answer, consider these statistics:

- A collision with wildlife occurs, on average, every 39 minutes.
- 1 out of 17 car collisions involves wandering wildlife.
- 89% of all wildlife collisions occur on roads with 2 lanes.
- 84% of all wildlife collisions occur in good weather on dry roads.
- The average repair cost of a car-deer collision is \$2,800.
- Approx 200 motorists die in the US/year from car-wildlife collisions.

To avoid adding to these statistics, trim your chances of colliding with wildlife by practicing the following precautions:

- Slow down when passing yellow animal-crossing signs. These warnings are posted not because road crews just happened to have a surplus of signs, but because heavy animal traffic frequents the area. Crashing at a higher speed is worse than at a lower speed.
- Wildlife is most active during dusk, dawn, and night. Deer are most frequently hit during dusk/dawn, bears and moose at night. Autumn, especially November, is the peak time for these accidents. When its dark, putting on your vehicle's high beams and lowering your dash lights will help you spot an animal more quickly.
- Headlights have an illumination range of 250 to 500 feet. To allow for sufficient brake time, reduce your speed at night.
- Pay attention to shoulders. Even though wildlife may be off to the side as your car approaches, animals may suddenly attempt to flee by inexplicably leaping into the road. Slow as you approach, and don't hesitate to hit the horn.
- Look for reflecting eyes.
- Slow if you spy a moose. These gangly animals harbor a weird escape gene. Instead of leaping into forested cover, moose will gallop down the road ahead of you for long distances before finally veering into the woods.
- Keep in mind that deer, elk, and antelope wander in groups. If you see one crossing, slow to a crawl. More are bound to follow.
- Deer whistles are merely peace-of-mind placebos. Research remains inconclusive as to the advantages of these car-mounted devices.

Now, finally, to answer the swerve-or-not-to-swerve dilemma, experts advise not swerving. You can suffer more ghastly consequences from an oncoming vehicle than from a leaping mule deer or skittering antelope. It is best to lock the brakes, blow the horn, and if it's a large animal, duck behind the dashboard. Moose are one of the exceptions to the do-not-swerve rule. An adult moose can grow to 1,600 pounds. Consequently, colliding with a moose is comparable to colliding with a compact vehicle on stilts, with the likelihood of fatal or long-term injuries to the front-seat occupants of your car. So if the situation allows, **swerve for a moose.**

SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Vic White, EMA, Chair
- Lisa Oedewaldt, EMA Vice-Chair, training
- Brenda Rebo, Annex, Record Keeper
- Tom Magone, Maintenance,
- Leigh Riggleman, Clerk & Recorder
- Laura Schrader, Sheriff
- Craig Schultz, Libby Road #1
- Rob Jorgensen, Eureka Road #3
- Rick Ball, Library
- Dennis Day, Landfill
- Karmen McKinney, North Annex
- Dick Wornham, Ambulance
- Patti Noble, District Court

MONTHLY DEPARTMENTAL SAFETY MEETINGS

Please remember, monthly departmental safety meetings must be documented and attendance rosters turned into Brenda Rebo. Attendance rosters should be turned in at the conclusion of each monthly safety meeting. The county will continue to conduct quarterly dinner gift certificate drawings for employees of departments who have 100% attendance at their monthly safety meetings. Employees attending all 12 departmental safety meetings shall be eligible for a safety incentive award at the end of the year.

