

Car-Deer Crashes in Lapeer County, 2021 to 2026

Prepared by Lapeer County Central Dispatch (LCCD) for law enforcement · Oct 27, 2026

Summary

Lapeer County Central Dispatch (LCCD) logged 8,139 car-deer crashes from April 26, 2021 through October 26, 2026, about 1,535 in a typical full year, or roughly four every day. They follow a tight and predictable pattern of season, light and road, which makes them a good fit for targeted patrol, public warnings and roadside work.

- **Season:** November is the worst month every year, and the three weeks from late October through mid-November average 70 to 82 crashes a week, nearly three times the yearly average of about 30.
- **Light:** The worst half hour of the day is 30 to 60 minutes after sunset. The two hours after sunset and the hour before sunrise, about three hours of each day, hold 37% of all crashes.
- **Time change:** In each of the last five years, evening crashes jumped after clocks fell back in November. Over five years, 5 to 8 p.m. crashes rose from 137 in the two weeks before the change to 261 in the two weeks after.
- **Place:** Rural townships carry the load. Lapeer, Elba, Mayfield and Attica townships each had about 600 to 730 crashes, while the City of Lapeer had 226.
- **Roads:** M-24 (Lapeer Road) had 948 crashes, I-69 had 731 and M-53 (Van Dyke Road) had 663. The I-69 interchanges at Elba Road, Lake Nepessing Road and Wilder Road are the three worst locations in the county.
- **Trend:** Crashes peaked in 2022 and 2023 and have eased slightly since. 2026 is running about 5% behind 2025 for the same dates.

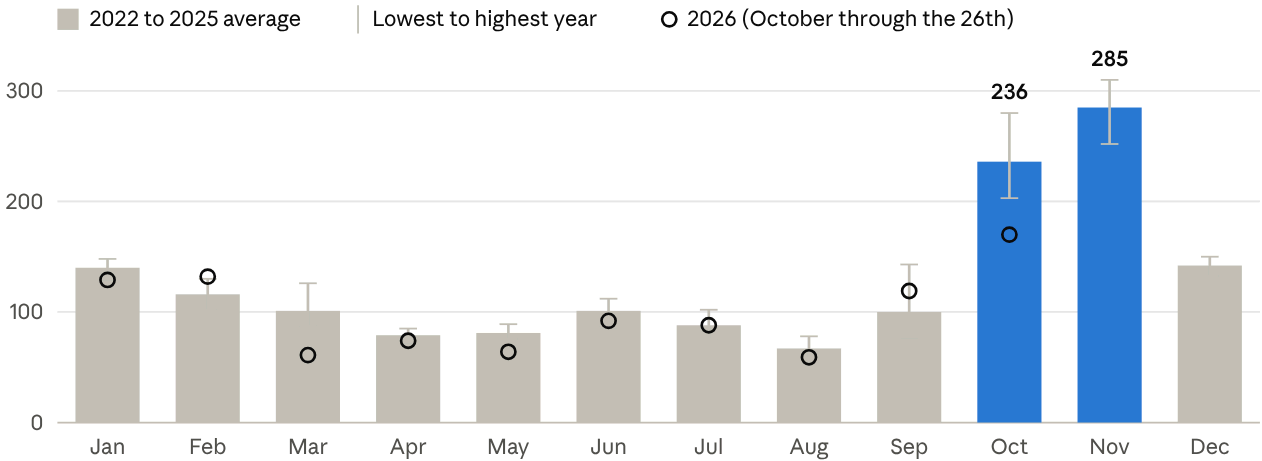
How often

Car-deer crashes run about 1,500 to 1,600 a year, peaked in 2023, and have eased slightly since. 2026 is running about 5% behind 2025 for the same dates.

Year	Full-year crashes	January 1 to October 26
2021	1,011 (from April 26)	578 (from April 26)
2022	1,574	1,087
2023	1,593	1,094
2024	1,492	1,034
2025	1,481	1,039
2026	Not yet complete	988

November is the worst month for deer crashes every year

Average car-deer crashes by month, 2022 to 2025 (about 1,536 a year), with each month's lowest and highest year



LCCD car-deer dispatch cards · full years 2022 to 2025, and 2026 through October 26

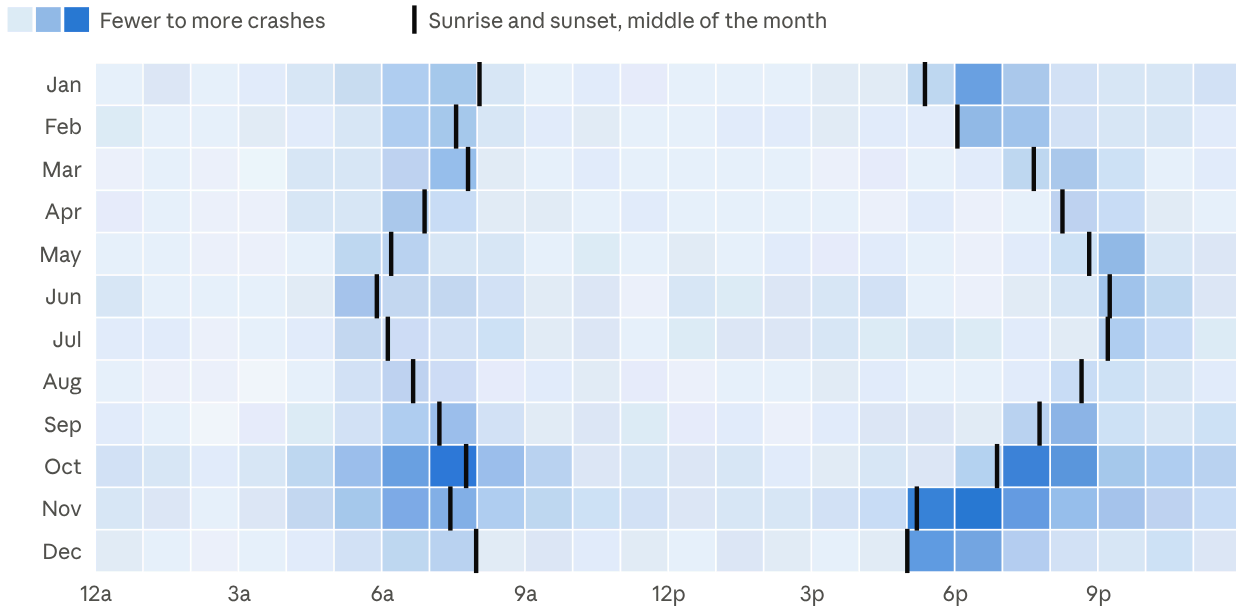
October and November together hold about a third of each year’s crashes. The worst single day of each year fell between November 1 and November 13, with 17 to 19 crashes, and the three weeks from late October through mid-November average 70 to 82 crashes a week. A second, smaller bump comes in January and February, and the quietest month is August.

Time of day

Deer crashes cluster at dawn and dusk, and the clusters move with the sun through the year. The worst half hour of the day is 30 to 60 minutes after sunset, with 740 crashes over five years, followed by the half hour before sunrise with 561.

Deer crashes follow sunrise and sunset through the year

8,139 car-deer crashes by month and hour of the call, April 2021 to October 2026; darker means more crashes



LCCD car-deer dispatch cards · 8,139 crashes, April 26, 2021 to October 26, 2026 · sunrise and sunset calculated for the City of Lapeer

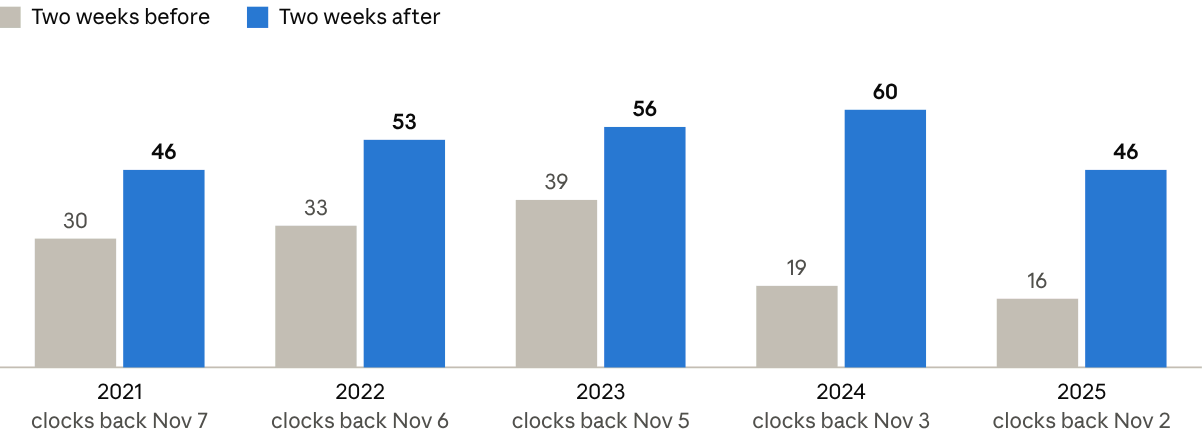
- **Evening shifts with sunset.** The evening peak is 6 to 7 p.m. in January, 9 to 10 p.m. in June and back to 5 to 7 p.m. in November.
- **Morning shifts with sunrise.** The morning peak runs from 5 to 6 a.m. in June to 7 to 8 a.m. in October and March.
- **Midday is quiet** in every month. From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. the county averages about one deer crash every two days.
- **Commuters bear the brunt.** 86% of crashes between 5 and 9 a.m. happen on weekdays, compared with 76% of crashes overall. Monday and Tuesday are the busiest days (about 1,290 each over five years) and Sunday the quietest (877).

The fall time change

When clocks fall back in early November, the evening commute suddenly moves into darkness during the peak of deer activity. In every one of the last five years, crashes between 5 and 8 p.m. jumped in the two weeks after the change, from 137 to 261 in total, an increase of 91%.

Evening deer crashes nearly double after clocks fall back

Car-deer crashes from 5 to 8 p.m., two weeks before and two weeks after the November time change: 137 before, 261 after



LCCD car-deer dispatch cards · calls between 5:00 and 7:59 p.m., 14 days on each side of the fall time change, 2021 to 2025

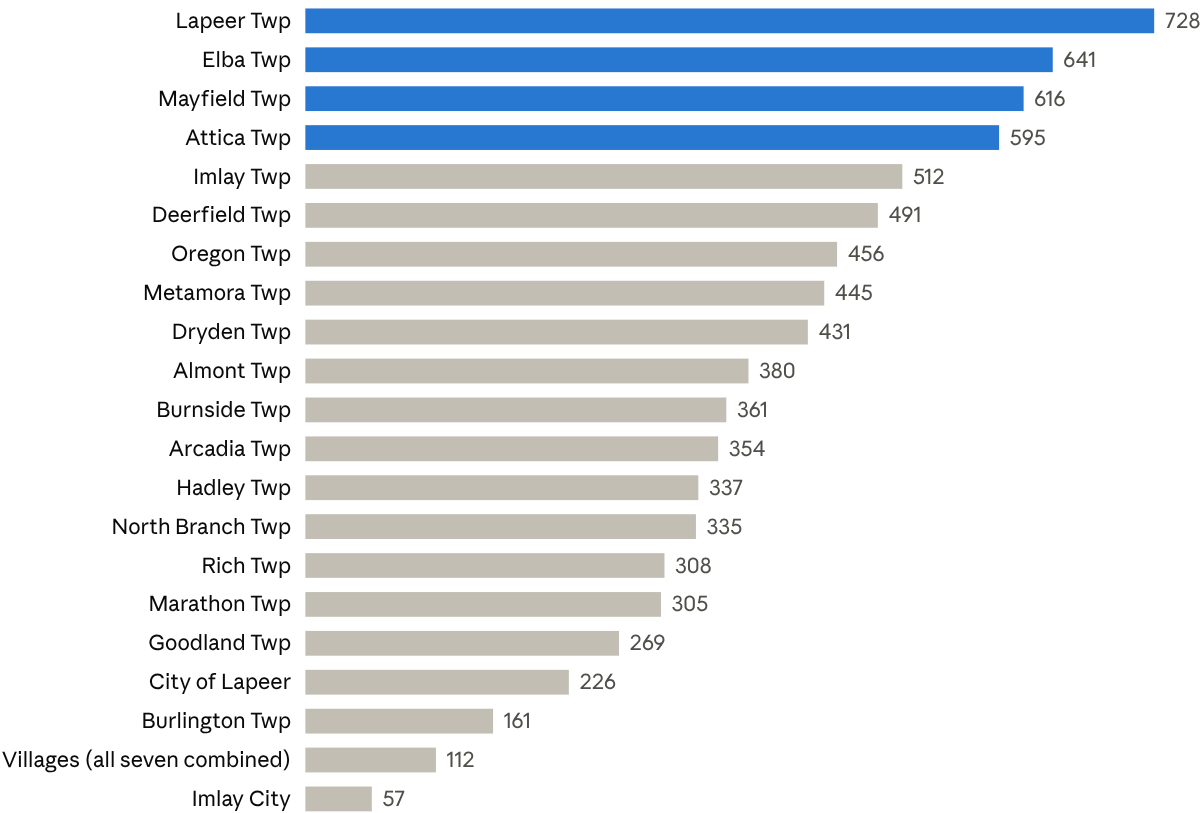
The jump is not just the season building. All-day crashes rose only 15% across the same two-week windows (646 before, 745 after), so the evening increase is mostly about when people are on the road in the dark. The spring change, when clocks move ahead in March, has a smaller effect on mornings: 62 crashes between 6 and 9 a.m. before the change and 79 after.

Where: townships

Deer crashes are a township problem. Lapeer, Elba, Mayfield and Attica townships each logged about 600 to 730 crashes over five years, while the City of Lapeer had 226, Imlay City 57 and all seven villages together 112.

Four townships each had about 600 or more deer crashes in five years

Car-deer crashes by community, April 2021 to October 2026 (8,120 with a county location)



LCCD car-deer dispatch cards · by the community the call was plotted in · villages: Almont 55, North Branch 25, Clifford 12, Dryden 10, Otter Lake 4, Columbiaville 3, Metamora 3

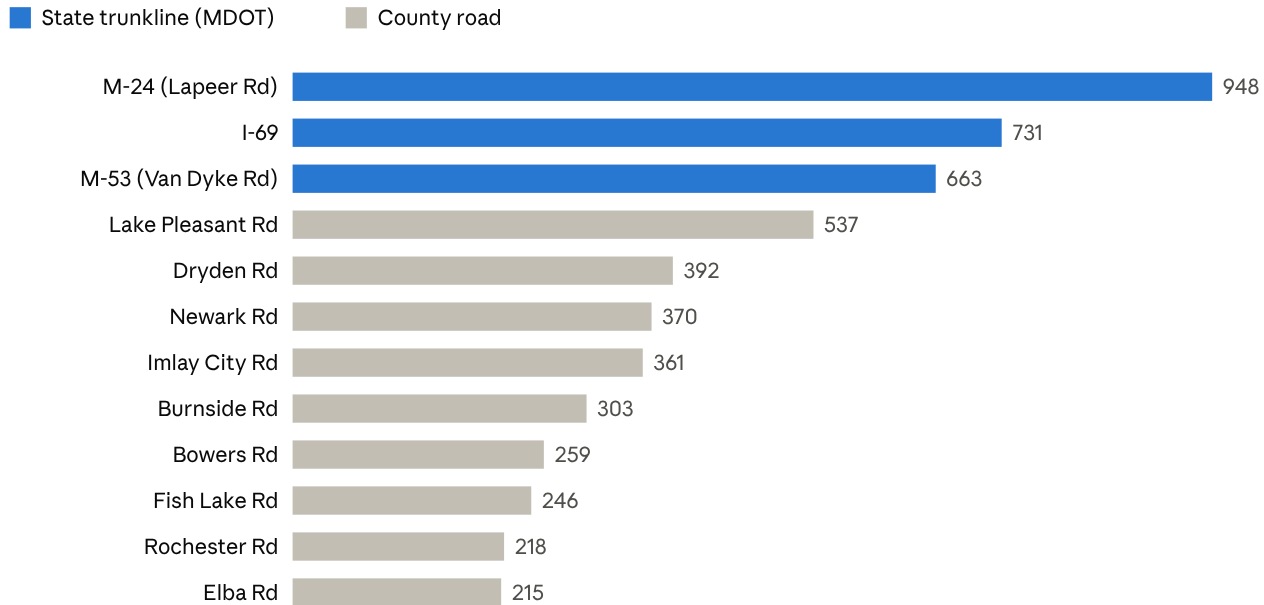
The ranking is steady from year to year. Lapeer Township has been first or second in every full year from 2022 through 2025.

Roads and intersections

Three state highways carry the most deer crashes: M-24 (Lapeer Road) with 948, I-69 with 731 and M-53 (Van Dyke Road) with 663. Lake Pleasant Road is the worst county road, with 537.

Three state highways lead the county in deer crashes

Car-deer crashes by road, April 2021 to October 2026; M-24, I-69 and M-53 together: 2,342



LCCD car-deer dispatch cards · a crash at the crossing of two listed roads counts once for each road

- **M-24** is worse north of the city than south: 512 crashes on N. Lapeer Road compared with 413 on S. Lapeer Road.
- **M-53** is worse on its northern stretch: 408 crashes on N. Van Dyke Road compared with 184 on S. Van Dyke Road.
- **I-69** crashes split fairly evenly by direction (350 eastbound, 311 westbound) and bunch at the interchanges, which top the list below. The few calls with a mile marker fall between mile markers 148 and 171.

The 20 worst intersections. These are the locations where crashes were most often plotted. "In the dark" means more than 30 minutes after sunset or before sunrise.

Intersection	Township	Crashes	October to December	In the dark	Since January 2024
I-69 at Elba Rd	Elba Twp	68	35	39	25
I-69 at Lake Nepessing Rd	Elba Twp	65	34	36	28
I-69 at Wilder Rd	Lapeer Twp	64	32	42	34
I-69 at Lake Pleasant Rd	Attica Twp	53	17	28	31
M-53 (Van Dyke Rd) at I-69	Imlay Twp	52	28	27	20
M-24 (Lapeer Rd) at Barnes Rd	Rich Twp	50	22	27	23

Intersection	Township	Crashes	October to December	In the dark	Since January 2024
M-24 (Lapeer Rd) at Hunters Creek Rd	Lapeer Twp	48	25	31	27
Burnside Rd at Lake Pleasant Rd	North Branch Twp	48	20	28	20
Bowers Rd at Lake Pleasant Rd	Arcadia Twp	44	19	25	23
Graham Rd at Imlay City Rd	Imlay Twp	43	17	25	20
M-24 (Lapeer Rd) at Millington Rd	Rich Twp	43	11	27	25
M-24 (Lapeer Rd) at Newark Rd	Lapeer Twp	43	21	25	21
M-24 (Lapeer Rd) at Pratt Rd	Metamora Twp	41	17	33	21
M-24 (Lapeer Rd) at I-69	City of Lapeer	41	15	30	23
M-53 (Van Dyke Rd) at Clear Lake Rd	Goodland Twp	41	16	25	20
Dryden Rd at Rochester Rd	Dryden Twp	40	16	23	13
M-53 (Van Dyke Rd) at Bowers Rd	Imlay Twp	40	14	21	21
Lake Pleasant Rd at Lum Rd	Arcadia Twp	40	18	25	16
M-24 (Lapeer Rd) at Sutton Rd	Lapeer Twp	39	17	27	13
I-69 at Graham Rd	Imlay Twp	38	28	23	19

I-69 at Wilder Road and at Lake Pleasant Road have been the most active since 2024, with 34 and 31 crashes. Dryden Road at Rochester Road and M-24 at Sutton Road have cooled off, with 13 each since 2024.

At the scene

Most car-deer crashes end with a damaged but drivable vehicle, but a meaningful share tie up an officer for a tow, an injured deer or a hazard in the road. These counts come from what dispatchers typed in the call notes, so they are minimums.

What the notes recorded	Crashes	Share of all 8,139
Vehicle drivable	3,786	47%
Wrecker or tow mentioned	1,181	15%
Vehicle not drivable	623	8%
Injured deer put down by an officer	587	7%
Deer still in the roadway	434	5%
Reported after the fact (next day, from home or walk-in)	515	6%
Airbags deployed	284	3%

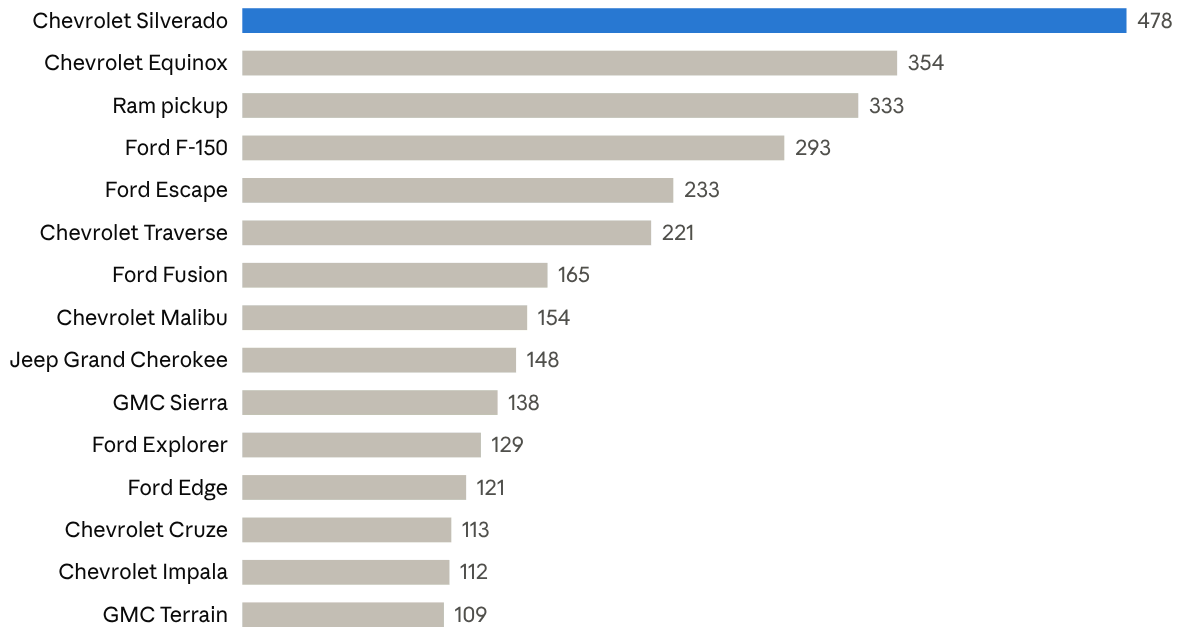
- **How calls come in:** 52% came in on 911 and 44% on a 10-digit line.
- **Response:** For the 7,731 calls with an arrival time, the median from call to officer arrival was 18 minutes.
- **Other animals:** A few dozen calls under this code involved turkeys, dogs or other animals rather than deer.

Vehicles involved

This is an ancillary measure only. The vehicle a driver is in has no bearing on whether they hit a deer; these counts mirror what people in and around Lapeer County drive. Dispatchers recorded a make for 7,045 crashes (87%) and a model for 5,891 (72%).

The Chevrolet Silverado is the vehicle most often in deer crashes

Top 15 models named in car-deer call notes, April 2021 to October 2026; this reflects what people drive here, not risk



LCCD car-deer dispatch cards · 5,891 crashes with a vehicle model in the notes · Ram pickup includes 1500, 2500 and 3500

- **Makes:** Chevrolet (2,103), Ford (1,468), GMC (557), Jeep (545), Dodge (357) and Ram (333) lead. Domestic brands account for 87% of the vehicles identified.
- **Types:** SUVs and crossovers were 48% of vehicles with a known model, pickups 26%, cars 22% and minivans 5%.
- **Larger vehicles:** 37 semi-trucks and 18 buses, 3 of them school buses, were involved. About five motorcycles hit a deer.
- **Age:** Where the notes gave a model year (2,757 crashes), the median was a 2015 model.

Law enforcement jurisdiction

71% of car-deer crashes fall in areas covered by the Lapeer County Sheriff's Office and Michigan State Police. This counts crashes by whose patrol beat the location falls in, not by which unit responded.

Jurisdiction	Crashes	Share
Lapeer County Sheriff's Office and Michigan State Police	5,783	71%

Jurisdiction	Crashes	Share
Lapeer Township Police Department	729	9%
Metamora Township Police Department	449	6%
Almont Police Department	434	5%
Dryden Township Police Department	430	5%
Lapeer City Police Department	222	3%
Imlay City Police Department	58	1%

The other 34 calls had no beat or an out-of-county beat.

What this suggests

The pattern is narrow enough to act on: three state highways, two windows of the day and about six weeks in the fall. These are options for discussion, not findings.

For patrol

- From mid-October through November, put visible patrol on M-24, M-53 and I-69 in the two hours after sunset and the hour before sunrise.
- Plan for the jump in evening crashes in the two weeks after the November time change, when the evening commute moves into darkness.
- Keep in mind that about 7% of calls need an officer to put down an injured deer and 5% involve a deer still in the road.

For public messaging

- Time warnings for mid-October and again for the weekend clocks fall back.
- Keep the message simple: dusk and dawn, October and November, and the three state highways.

For the Lapeer County Road Commission

- Review deer warning signs, sight lines and roadside brush at the intersections in the table above, starting with those still active in 2024 to 2026.
- Treat each listed intersection as a stretch of road, not a single point. 90% of these crashes are logged at the nearest cross street, so the actual strike may be some distance away.

- M-24, M-53 and I-69 are state trunklines under the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), so those locations would need to go to MDOT as well.

About the data

These figures come only from LCCD's computer-aided dispatch (CAD) cards coded as car-deer property damage crashes. They are not the official crash reports (UD-10s) officers file with the State of Michigan and may not match state crash data.

- **Period:** April 26, 2021 through October 26, 2026. 2021 starts in late April and 2026 runs through October 26, so neither is a full year. Year comparisons use the full years 2022 through 2025, or the same dates in each year.
- **Only reported crashes appear.** Many deer strikes are never called in, so the real number is higher.
- **Times are call times.** About 6% of crashes were reported hours or a day later, so their times reflect the call, not the crash.
- **Location** is where the call was plotted in CAD, usually the nearest intersection, and sometimes the caller's home or the place they stopped.
- **Scene details and vehicles** come from free-text dispatcher notes. A make was recorded for 87% of crashes and a model for 72%.
- **Sunrise and sunset** were calculated for the City of Lapeer for each crash date, adjusted for daylight saving time.