

RESIDENTIAL SALT USAGE

Seasonal information targeting stormwater runoff and water quality issues from the Phase II Stormwater Management Communication Committee.

Marketing Season: November thru February

Salt Improves Winter Driveway Conditions But Harms Ecosystems

Keeping roads and parking areas free of ice and snow is an essential part of modern life. However, road salt – one of the main tools used to achieve this task – contains chloride as its principal ingredient, in both sodium chloride and potassium chloride based products. Chloride does more than melt snow and ice; it negatively impacts local lakes and rivers.

As snow and ice melt, they drain into landscaped areas or storm sewers, and then to natural bodies of water. Waters from a deiced area contain high levels of chlorides, which do not degrade, and there is no cost effective way to remove it. Excessive levels of chlorides can severely impair the ability of plants to absorb water and nutrients. These negative effects are common to both aquatic and terrestrial plants in residential gardens, landscaped areas, and rivers. Fish and other aquatic organisms are then impacted by the decline in habitat. In surface waters, such as lakes, ponds, and streams, salt can harm or kill aquatic life, including fish and plants.

What can I do to help?

- Shovel (or use a snow blower) before you use any product; never put a deicing product on top of snow.
- Adopt the “Just Enough” principle, putting down just enough product to keep high traffic areas clear of ice.
- Sweep up un-dissolved product after a storm is over for reuse.
- Consider switching to a non-chloride deicer.
- Support changes by your municipality to minimize salt usage.
- Inform a neighbor about the impacts chlorides have in our streams and rivers.



Editors Note: Some cities may have adopted ordinances or requirements not included herein.