SALTING GOES BEYOND THE PAVEMENT

Wisconsin is known for its brutal and unforgiving winters, so residents take extra steps to make sure we're safe throughout winter storms. This includes using salt to deice the walking and driving surfaces at our homes and businesses. But what you may not know is that using this salt is harmful to our environment and our waters and puts our loved ones at risk.

Taking on Winter Without Taking Down

Our Environment

www.WiSaltWise.com

Homeowners
More Salt, More Risk

Using more salt doesn't make your sidewalks safer — it harms plants and animals, pollutes our water, damages buildings and corrodes vehicles, roads and bridges. Once you put it down, salt doesn't go away. Instead, it travels into our lakes and streams, putting our aquatic life at risk and endangering our freshwater resources. Salt also alters the composition of soil, slows plant growth and weakens the concrete, brick and stone that make up your home and garage. Using the right amount of salt maximizes your family's safety. Using 10 pounds less salt this season will protect over 3,000 gallons of water from being permanently polluted. Be WI Salt Wise!

Salting for Safety

It's understandable that you want to keep your home safe, especially when a winter storm hits. Fortunately, there are ways you can improve your salt use and safety:

- **Pre-treat walkways** with a small amount of liquid deicer before the storm hits to prevent snow and ice from building up. Dissolve salt in warm water until salt no longer dissolves (or take some from your water softener tank) to create a brine, and apply it with a watering can.
- **Clear walkways** and other areas before the snow turns to ice. The more snow you remove manually, the less salt you will have to use and the more effective it will be.
- **Only use deicers in critical areas** and apply the least amount necessary. Use less than four pounds of salt per 1,000 square feet (an average parking space is about 150 square feet), or, **as a general rule, just use less salt than you did last year.** One twelve-ounce container (like a coffee cup) is sufficient to salt sixty to seventy feet of sidewalk.
- If there are leftover crystals still visible after salting, you can **sweep the excess up to be reused** and try to use less next time.
- At temperatures below 15 degrees Fahrenheit, salt becomes less effective. **Consider using sand instead for traction.**
- **Use the right product.** Look at product labels for specific ingredients:
  - **Sodium chloride:** Sodium chloride is commonly known as rock salt and is the least expensive deicer product. It's also hard on the environment and not very effective at pavement temperatures less than 15˚F.
  - **Calcium chloride:** This compound is effective at temperatures down to -20˚F and is less harmful to vegetation.
  - **Calcium magnesium acetate:** This salt-free product works down to 20˚F and is safer for vegetation and concrete surfaces.
  - **Sand:** Sand provides traction at any temperature, but it should not be mixed with deicers.
- **Store ice melting products** in airtight containers to maintain maximum effectiveness.
- When your pet comes in from being outside, **wipe his or her paws and underside.**
- **Wear boots or shoes with good traction** so you can walk safely to your destination.
- **Watch a homeowner tips video** by visiting www.youtube.com/watch?v=qc8Y-_Nmfmo.
- **Read and pass along WI Salt Wise brochures.**
- **If you are responsible for snow and ice removal** somewhere other than your home, please check out our training and resources tab by visiting wisaltwise.com.

Hiring an Applicator/Snow Removal Service

- Discuss expectations with your applicator. Let them know you are WI Salt Wise!
- Many local applicators have been trained in winter maintenance practices that reduce environmental impact. Assess their awareness.
- Mechanical removal (shovel/plow) is more effective and safer than excessive application, so confirm their procedures and make sure they're using mechanical means first.
- The right amount of deicing chemicals (one to four pounds per 1000 square feet) can be effective for ice. Determine what equipment they use and how they calibrate it.
- Deicing chemicals work differently with different pavement temperatures and weather forecasts — discuss their protocols.
- Communication can protect your surfaces, wallet and water. Alert your applicator when too much salt has been applied.

Small steps equal a big payoff for our environment.
To discover more ways you can help Wisconsin, visit wisaltwise.com.

Brought to you by the WI Salt Wise Partnership:

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