



Speed up

**SLOW DOWN
ON SALT**



on Safety



Motorists

While driving during the winter, you need to be highly focused on the driving conditions. Unfortunately, too often drivers expect that after the roads have been plowed, they'll be as safe as in the summertime. But expectations like those come with costs — the cost of excessive salt usage, environmental damage and even lives.



WE LIVE IN THE FROZEN TUNDRA — EMBRACE IT

Winter road maintenance activities have evolved significantly, leading drivers to expect good driving conditions at all times. Better driving conditions allow motorists to travel at high speeds, which causes agencies to put down even more salt.

But maintaining ice-free and snow-free roads at all times because of drivers' expectations leads to oversalting. What many don't understand is that the goal of winter maintenance is to maintain "passable roadways," or roadways that are free of drifts, snow ridges and as much ice as possible, rather than achieving perfect driving conditions. Many also believe that more salt means safer roads, when, in reality, when applied correctly, a lower amount of salt is as effective as over-application.

Too much road salt contributes to the breakdown of roads and bridges and damage to our vegetation, aquatic life, freshwater resources and vehicles. Our current practices are not sustainable; our wetlands, streams and ponds in urban areas have already reached harmful levels of salt. Road salt has been used as a deicer on streets in the

Dane County region since the late 1950s, and over the last 50 years, average lake water concentrations have steadily increased — in Lake Mendota, the salt concentration increases about 1 mg/L each year. If that rate continues, the waters will eventually taste salty and become toxic to aquatic life.

Oversalting is hard on our tax dollars as well. Wisconsin spent over \$40 million on salt for our highways last year, and that doesn't include what communities, businesses and homeowners spent. If we follow recommended salting guidelines and apply the correct amount of salt, the cost would significantly decrease and the excess money could be put toward improving Wisconsin in other ways.

Remember this winter that the consequences of wanting to get where you're going as fast as possible are expensive, irreversible and can be harmful to you and our environment. Limiting our salt use today will create a better environment, and a healthier wallet, for tomorrow.

Drive Smarter, Not Faster

Rather than depending on summer driving conditions in a Wisconsin winter, accept that our weather involves ice and snow. Stay off the roads when it's snowing if possible. If it's not, remember that roads covered in snow and ice should be treated as an emergency, so travel accordingly by:

- Waiting to allow time for plowing and deicers.
- Clearing snow and ice from all windows and lights before driving.
- Making sure your tires have good tread and are properly inflated. If possible, invest in winter tires for better traction.
- Knowing the current road conditions before you hit the road.
- Leaving sufficient room for stopping, and braking correctly and early.
- Avoiding tailgating plows.
- Opting out of cruise control.
- Traveling slowly, using caution and reason. Remember, the police can and will ticket and fine you if you are traveling at an unsafe speed for the conditions.
- Driving for the conditions.



By driving cautiously and encouraging decreased salt use, we can maintain our beautiful state for us and future generations to enjoy. Learn more about what you can do by visiting wisaltwise.com.

Brought to you by the WI Salt Wise Partnership:

