

WINTER MAINTENANCE

DEICING BEST PRACTICES

What is the problem with road salt?

Salting roads, sidewalks, and driveways is part of winter maintenance in our area. However, after the snow and ice have melted away, the salt and deicing agents used to treat roads and sidewalks remain. These products flow over impervious surfaces into the stormwater system. Then, they flow directly into our waterways, untreated.

Salt in our water is bad for plants, wildlife, and people. Birds mistake salt crystals for food, and it can be toxic for fish and other aquatic systems. In wetlands, salt-tolerant invasive plants can thrive and crowd out native vegetation that wildlife and pollinators depend on for food and habitat. Increased salt in aquifers and reservoirs can impact our drinking water supply.

Alternatives to Rock Salt

Calcium Chloride: no cyanide, requires 1/3 the amount compared to rock salt, however can still harm plants, 3x more expensive than rock salt

Magnesium Chloride: least toxic deicing salt due to less chloride, but may still harm plants and animals

Calcium Magnesium Acetate: biodegradable, non-corrosive, can be expensive

Sugar Beet Juice: fully biodegradable, safer for plants and animals, not corrosive to vehicles, however sugar content can harm aquatic life

Brines: applied in liquid form, more effective in lower temperatures, cost-effective

Sand: used for traction rather than melting

Coffee Grounds: provides traction and melts ice by absorbing heat, dark color also absorbs heat well

Cat Litter: used for traction rather than melting, will not harm vegetation, animals, vehicles, cement, or paved surfaces

Fireplace Ashes: melts ice and provides traction, can act as a fertilizer

How do you use salt responsibly?

- ❖ **Remove snow first.** Always remember to shovel, snow blow, and/or plow first to remove snow and ice as it builds up. Then, apply a deicer **only if needed**, and in as little an amount as necessary.
- ❖ **Use deicer sparingly.** Excessive deicer will not provide any additional safety benefit! Use less than 4 pounds of salt per 1,000 square feet (the average parking space is 150 square feet). One pound of salt equals a 12-ounce coffee cup.
- ❖ **Choose sand for low temps.** Typical deicers won't melt snow and ice effectively when it's 15°F or colder out, so use sand for traction instead.
- ❖ **Don't be wasteful.** Sweep up excess or unused salt and sand, as it will otherwise get washed into a nearby waterway.



Salt next to storm drain

Wasteful salt use

Snow Removal Guidelines

Homeowners can assist the Township's Public Works Department in providing an improved level of service by observing the following guidelines:

- Do not park vehicles on the street until it has been completely cleared off.
- Wait until the street is plowed before clearing driveway opening.
- Never shovel snow out into the street.
- Shovel out fire hydrants if they are located on your property.
- Have a greater awareness of Township vehicles salting or plowing snow when driving.
- Remove snow or ice from the sidewalk promptly after snowfall, sleet, or freezing rain stops.
- Make sure mailboxes are properly secure.