

Save Money—Use Less Salt This Winter

Salt and sand contribute greatly to lake and stream pollution. Once it's spread on parking lots, streets, sidewalks and driveways, it's on its way to the nearest lake or stream and cannot be recovered. Fifty pounds of salt (one large bag) can pollute 10,000 gallons of water—which is equivalent to one teaspoon in a five-gallon bucket of water. Municipalities are working to cut salt use while still keeping streets safe. So, let's all save money this winter with these helpful tips and help the lakes and streams at the same time.

- Always use a shovel first, especially if the pavement temperature is 32°F or more—don't waste money on deicers.
- Reserve deicers for ice, not snow. Shovel as soon as possible so that wet, heavy snow doesn't have the opportunity to turn to ice.
- All salt is not created equal. Various types of deicers perform differently at different temperature ranges. The most common and cheapest is sodium chloride ("rock salt"), but doesn't work when the pavement is colder than 15°F. Magnesium chloride and calcium chloride cost more, but you'll use less and it works in colder temps.
- Consider getting a pavement thermometer (~\$30) to help determine pavement temperatures, which can vary widely depending on how much sun shines on your driveway.
- Measure your sidewalk and driveway so you know how much you need. A general guideline is to use 1-3 cups of salt per 1,000 square feet. Save money by using only what is needed.
- Apply liquid salt to the pavement before the storm and shovel a little while it's snowing. After the storm, shovel before using any salt. Most times, you won't need any. Use deicers on ice, don't waste it on snow.
- You can use 30% less deicer if you wet your salt with some water before applying it.
- While salt is sometimes mixed with sand to keep the sand from freezing into a solid block, it's not a good idea to use both at the same time on your sidewalk. The salt will melt the ice, but when it refreezes, the sand will be frozen below the surface where it can't do any good. Choose one or the other. Try removing the ice by hand first before using either sand or salt.
- If you have an area that tends to ice up, consider making it a priority to remedy next summer so you won't need to deice in the future.

Caveat emptor! (Buyer beware!)

Read the label on the ice melt product so that you know exactly what you are spending your hard-earned cash on. If the bag doesn't say otherwise, it's probably sodium chloride, but you're better off using something that says exactly what's in the bag. Some products claiming to be "green" or "pet safe" are simply chloride compounds. You can always ask for the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for the product—it will show percentages so that you can see if you are paying for pretty packaging of rock salt. And while you're reading, be sure to follow the application rates. You need much less of some products than others, so be sure not to waste money by over applying.

| Labeled as: | Works Down to: | Approximate Cost | Pros/Concerns |
|--------------------|----------------|---|--|
| Calcium Chloride | -25°F | \$35 for 50 pounds | Use much less than rock salt, chloride impacts; may damage concrete |
| Magnesium Chloride | 5°F | \$30-\$35 for 50 pounds; \$15-\$20 for 20 pounds | less toxic than calcium chloride and less damaging to concrete and pavement, but |

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| | | | may corrode metals over time |
| Sodium Chloride ("rock salt") | 15°F | \$6 for 25 pound bag | Chloride impacts |
| Calcium Magnesium Acetate (CMA) | 25 °F | \$20 for 50 pounds | No chlorides; less toxic |
| Potassium Chloride | 25°F | | need to use more than rock salt; works slower than calcium chloride, safer on concrete |
| Sand | No melting effect | \$5 for a 20 lb bag | Not a deicer; for traction only; do not use with salt; accumulates in streets, lakes and streams; needs to be swept up, easily tracked into buildings |

Urea and Amide/Glycol are other deicing products that are chloride free and touted as pet/kid/environmentally friendly, but generally are not as effective as chlorides. However, when combined with shoveling first, can be a useful alternative.