

Clean Water Starts at Home

Tip #7: Winter Walkways Worth their Salt?

As snow season draws near, consider this: sodium chloride (NaCl) is the most common form of salt used for de-icing roads and walkways. It is used so much that it has become a water pollutant. Here are ways to reduce chloride pollution, have safer walking areas, and maybe save some money:

#1: Remove snow **during** a snowstorm instead of waiting until the end. Start with the very first snow and keep up the rest of the winter, especially in shaded walkways.

#2: Think “anti-icing.” The goal is to break the bond between ice and pavement just where you need it so it can be shoveled or plowed (as opposed to melting everything).

#3: Treat **before** a storm to help prevent ice buildup so less de-icer is needed.

Alternatives: Sand - for traction only - safe and effective, but sweep up excess and re-use

- Liquid magnesium chloride, calcium chloride, potassium chloride (all 3 work better than regular salt in colder temps), calcium magnesium acetate and potassium acetate.
 - Do Not apply if ice has already formed, in rainy, sleety, blowing conditions, or if snowfall is more than 1-inch per hour.
 - Concrete may require specialized use or product. Salt, chlorides, and urea-based (“pet-friendly”) options can cause pitting or spalling of concrete surface. Check product label for concrete use.

Products change each year.
Some past alternatives:
Zero Ice Melt
Quik Joe’s Ice Melt
Ice Away
Hydro-melt

Too costly?
Try sand – don’t mix with salt which will melt sand into ice and reduce its traction ability.

#4: After storms; use as little de-icer as possible:

The closest salt substitute is potassium acetate, but is hard to find- ask for it so as to create consumer demand

Sand - safe for pets and children (sweep up any excess).

Remember, regular salt is not effective at temperatures below 15 degrees (F). For colder temps, try sand... or pre-treat with liquid magnesium, calcium, or potassium chlorides.

For a video of winter salting tips at home, go to: <http://tiny.cc/dolopx> or go to: <http://tiny.cc/irlopX> for a factsheet.

Information provided by Coon Creek Watershed District (763.755.0975 or www.cooncreekwd.org).