



TALKING POINTS – Winter Salt Week

As you discuss Winter Salt Week and reducing salt use, focus on safety, savings, and sustainability. Keep in mind that safety is most people’s #1 concern.

Safety

- Reducing winter salt use does not compromise safety.
- Best practices such as removing snow right away, piling snow where it won’t melt and refreeze on walkways, and using a scraper to remove ice help keep people safe.
- Oversalting can create a slippery surface. People may slip when walking on a thick layer of salt granules, especially on stairs or sloped areas.

Savings

- More salt does not equal faster melting. Use winter salt sparingly to maintain safety and reduce costs.

Sustainability

- One teaspoon of salt is enough to permanently pollute five gallons of water.
- Reducing winter salt use helps keep our freshwater lakes and streams from turning into saltwater.
- Winter salt does not “go away” once winter is over. The salt accumulates each year in our lakes, wetland, and streams.

What is Winter Salt Week?

Winter Salt Week is dedicated week to spread awareness about the chloride pollution and how to reduce it. It’s sponsored by multiple agencies and organizations across the U.S. and Canada. The event consists of a series of online presentations over four days to provide expert knowledge about why we need to reduce winter salt and practical solutions for doing so. Presenters include water quality experts and winter maintenance practitioners.

The fifth and final day of Winter Salt Week offers an opportunity for local communities to host an event to help spread awareness such as a hands-on chloride testing demonstration in a local lake or stream.

Who is Winter Salt Week for?

Anyone interested in protecting lakes, streams, and drinking water can register for free to watch the online presentations. Day 1 and 2 presentations will focus on the issues caused by overuse of winter salt, while day 3 and 4 focus on solutions including new technologies. Visit WinterSaltWeek.org to register.

Your local community may also be holding a local Winter Salt Week event to help spread awareness. Contact your city, county, or watershed organization to find out if they're participating. Some events may be posted on WinterSaltWeek.org

Why should we care about winter salt pollution?

Overuse of winter salt threatens our lakes, streams and drinking water. One teaspoon of salt pollutes five gallons of water forever!

Once salt is in a waterbody, it can't be removed and accumulates every year. When salt levels reach a critical level, aquatic life in our lakes and streams can no longer survive.

Is there a winter deicing product that is environmentally friendly or pet friendly?

It's safe to assume that any product that claims to melt ice contains some form of salt (chloride), which is not friendly to the environment or pets. Buzzwords such as "Eco-friendly," "organic" and "paw-safe" are not certifications and can be used by any company as greenwashing to sell a product.

There is no regulation of labeling of winter deicing products. Ingredients may not be listed on a deicing product. However, if they product melts ice, it very likely includes some form of salt as an ingredient. **With all deicers, the best practice is to use the minimum amount.**



What can I use instead of winter salt?

All affordable and effective deicers contain chloride. Instead of using a deicer:

- Remove ice with a tool such as a scraper or sturdy snow shovel.

- Prevent ice buildup by removing snow before it becomes ice through compaction or melting/refreezing.
- When shoveling or plowing, select a storage location where the snow won't melt, drain away, and refreeze on top of walkways or parking areas.
- Use sand, grit, or non-clumping kitty litter to provide traction on icy areas.

What are best practices for handling ice and snow?

- Shovel or plow snow early to help prevent the formation of ice.
- When possible and, if needed, use a scraper to remove ice.
- Use the appropriate amount of deicer and spread evenly. A 12-ounce coffee mug holds enough salt to effectively treat about 1,000 square feet (a 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares).
- Sweep up excess salt from bare pavement. Dispose of the salt in the garbage or save it to use with the next storm.
- When it's below 15°F, salt doesn't melt. Create traction by sprinkling sand on top of ice.

**Keep in mind that more salt DOES NOT equal more melting or more safety.
In fact, oversalting may create a slippery surface.**

Visit [Low-Salt-No-Salt-MN.org](https://www.Low-Salt-No-Salt-MN.org) for more resources including *Frequently Asked Questions* and links to other resources.