

Think about it.....

Water Quality



We knew, inevitably, that winter would come to Stark County and with winter come icy slippery roads, driveways and sidewalks. Winter weather can cause headaches for all commuters so to keep us moving in the winter we salt the roadways.

Road salt is simply sodium chloride which breaks apart into sodium and chloride ions in water. Sodium Chloride in run-off from road deicing operations can also dramatically change salinity levels and the chemical composition of receiving waters. Deicing salt is considered a possible pollutant under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

Technology will one day find a more environmentally safe, economical substitute for salt but until then let's do our part to limit the salt used. Here are some tips on how you can help:

Buy early: Once the storm hits it is hard to find salt anywhere let alone an environmentally safe brand.

Check the label—know your salt risk zone: Read what you are buying. Check any environmental risks. As we know the cheapest is not always the best. Check the melting temperatures for the product you are choosing. You wouldn't want to kill your trees shrubs or grass. Some plants are extremely salt sensitive as shown below from the US Forestry, Department of Agriculture webpage. Use alternative deicing materials, such as sand or salt substitutes, where sensitive ecosystems should be protected.

Landscaping Areas	Species at Risk from Salting
Deciduous Trees	Tulip popular, Green Ash, Hickory, Red maple, Sugar Maple
Conifers	Balsam Fir, White Pine, Hemlock, Norway Spruce
Shrubs	Dogwood, Redbud, Hawthorn, Rose, Spirea
Grasses	Kentucky Bluegrass, red Fescue

Shovel often/apply salt early and sparingly: There is no substitute for snow removal like good old fashion shoveling. Deices work better on a thin layer of snow. Again, read the applications rates. It may surprise you to see how little salt is really needed. Throwing more salt will not speed up the melting process.

Want to know more? www.nsidc.org & www.saltinstitute.org