

we are

SALT SMART

We are using less salt this winter to protect clean water



Did you know?

Everything that goes down a storm drain ends up in a nearby lake, creek, or wetland. That includes salt and salty melted ice and snow, which pollute clean water.

Help us!

Do your part to protect clean water:

- Walk slowly
- Wear sturdy shoes
- Use less salt at home

What does it mean to be salt smart?

Winter in Minnesota is full of cozy traditions: sledding, snowmen, warm fires and hot cocoa. It also comes with a few that are not-so-fun: driveways that need shoveling, icy roads, and slippery sidewalks. And we often turn to road salt to help melt the ice and keep us safe. In the Twin Cities metro area we use an estimated 365,000 tons of road salt each year.

Salt contains chloride which pollutes water, and it only takes a little bit: just one teaspoon of salt is enough to pollute five gallons of water.

Have you ever wondered what happens to the salt we put down? It doesn't go away. It washes into stormdrains and flows through pipes to local lakes, streams, and wetlands. Once in the water, there is no way to feasibly remove it.

A study by the University of Minnesota found that over 70 percent of salt used for winter maintenance in the Twin Cities stays here. That means it is building up in groundwater, and local lakes and wetlands.

Salt pollution harms plants and animals, and contaminates drinking water. Just imagine our freshwater walleye and sunfish trying to live in a saltwater environment. In Minnesota's urban areas it isn't uncommon to find salt pollution in groundwater, and many lakes and creeks have too much salt to be healthy.

Decreasing salt use is a powerful way to protect Minnesota's waters. Luckily there are actions we can all take to stay safe and be salt smart.

Take this idea home And help us protect clean water



1. Shovel

Clear walkways before snow turns to ice. Apply salt only if needed.



2. Select

Salt doesn't melt ice below 15°F. Use sand for traction when it's too cold, or a different de-icer.



3. Scatter

Use salt only where critical. Aim for 3 inches of space between salt granules.



4. Sweep

Clean up leftover salt, sand, and de-icer to save and reuse as needed.

Graphics courtesy cleanwatermn.org

Action graphic from mwmo.org

Learn more:

Find your local watershed district by going to: www.cleanwatermn.org
Check out the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency website:
pca.state.mn.us/water/chloride-salts