

Energy City Insights – Smart Salting and Snow Removal (February)

Minnesota is the land of 10,000 lakes but did you know chloride contamination is a major concern for our waterbodies? Salt and anti-icing agents help keep our roads and sidewalks free of ice and snow, but they also contaminate our lakes and streams. In fact, just **one teaspoon** of salt is enough to pollute five gallons of water indefinitely - wrap your head around that! This month, *Energy City Insights* is focusing on environmentally friendly snow/ice removal for your home and/or business.

Slippery driveway or sidewalk? While salt may seem like an easy solution, the best way to avoid slippery surfaces outside is to shovel snow right away, before it turns to ice. The more you can remove manually, the less need you'll have for salt - not to mention it's a great workout!

If salt is necessary, please consider the following tips:

- Salt doesn't work in temperatures below 15 degrees
- Scatter salt - aim for 3 inches of space between granules, any more than is unnecessary and more costly
- Clean up leftover salt and anti-icing agents for reuse
- Salt takes times to work – be patient and give the salt some time to do its job before re-applying

Salt pollutes lakes, streams, wetlands and groundwater - the consequences of which will have a lasting effect on all of us for generations to come. Once chlorine from salt enters water, there is no way to remove it. High concentrations of chlorine can harm both aquatic wildlife and vegetation. Salt also can alter the composition of ground soil, impacting plants and endangering waterways as rain runoff carry soil to catch basins and other waterbodies.

The City of Elk River is doing its best to lead by example in the ongoing effort to establish an environmentally friendly snow and ice removal system, while keeping roadways as safe as possible and in turn minimizing the impacts on local waterways. Pre-treatment along with other best practices, have resulted in a 30% reduction in salt use in recent years, and as new technology and equipment emerge the city hopes to continue to reduce the amount of salt used on city streets while maintaining the same level of safety and service.

More information and state resources can be found online at:

[Clean Water MN](#)

[Mississippi Watershed Management Organization](#)

[Minnesota Pollution Control Agency](#)

[Minnesota Public Radio](#)