

Four Steps for Cleaner Water

Since the early 1950s our metro-area waters have become increasingly salty. Chloride from road salt and the products we use to keep our walks and driveways clear of ice is carried by snow and ice melt and spring runoff into our lakes, streams, and wetlands. This chloride can harm plants and animals, contaminate our drinking water, and corrode vehicles, roads, and bridges.

There are four steps that you can take at home or at work to help keep our waters cleaner.

- √ Before a big storm arrives, apply a liquid de-icer to prevent ice build up. You can make de-icer by mixing two cups of hot water with one cup of salt in a spray bottle. This brine helps keep the ice crystals from bonding to the pavement or your steps, and will make shoveling easier and more effective.
- √ Shovel, blow or plow your snow, and/or sweep as soon as possible. The longer you wait and the more the snow is walked or driven on the more likely the snow will bond to the pavement and form ice.
- √ If you apply salt and there are leftover crystals visible after the ice has melted, you have used too much. Leftover salt can be swept up and re-used or disposed of in the trash.
- √ Temperature matters. Salt is less effective when temperatures fall below 15°F. When it's really cold outside use sand or sand mixed with a little salt to provide traction until the ice can melt.