

Adopt a Low (Road) Salt Habit!

You have probably heard that too much salt in your diet can be bad for your health but did you know that it can be also be harmful for your local waterway?

Road salt is the most commonly used de-icer and it contains sodium and chloride. This road salt is carried by melting snow and ice into local lakes, streams and wetlands. Chloride is too costly to remove from water and it takes just one teaspoon of road salt to permanently pollute five gallons of water.

Here are some of the affects that road salts can have on our environment:

- At high concentrations, chloride is toxic to fish and insects.
- At lower levels, chloride can negatively affect the fish and insect populations by reducing reproduction and survival rates of young.
- Direct road salt splash can kill plants and grass.
- Sodium in road salt can destroy soil stability, decreasing the ability of the soil to filter water, and increasing soil erosion.

Here are some tips for using road salt wisely:

- Shovel (and use the right tool for the job). The more snow and ice you remove manually, the less salt you will have to use and the more effective it will be when you do use it.
- 15°F is too cold for salt. Most salts stop working at this temperature. Use sand instead for traction, but remember that sand does not melt ice.
- For best results, apply salt to cleared surfaces. The salt crystals should not overlap but be spread out a few inches apart.
- More salt does not mean more melting. Use less than 4 pounds of salt per 1,000 square feet (and average parking spot is about 150 square feet). One pound of salt is approximately a heaping 12-ounce coffee mug.
- Sweep up extra. If salt or sand is visible on dry pavement it is no longer doing any work and will be washed away into your local streams thru a storm drain or ditch system.
- Even if the de-icer says it's safe for pets - look at the ingredients! Calcium and magnesium chloride can burn their paws. Use a product with glycol or just use sand. And when you take your animals on a walk, cover their feet and/or wash them off after a walk.

For more information, go to www.youtube.com and search for 'Improved Water Maintenance: Good Choices for Clean Water.'

Information is provided by the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization

Visit our website for more conservation tips on how to Keep Your Yard Green and Our Waters Clean!

www.cuyahogawcd.org

