



Smart Snow and Ice Maintenance

Resource Sheet for HOAs and Civic Associations

Winter 2024

Smart snow and ice maintenance during the winter is crucial for homeowner associations (HOAs) and civic associations to ensure residents' safety, maintain property values, and prevent liability, while also limiting the impacts of winter salt on the environment and reducing long-term maintenance and improvement costs to vehicles and infrastructure. The following resource list provides information and links for HOA leaders to make informed decisions when they are preparing for snow and ice in the winter months. From maintenance contracts to member resident education and outreach, these tools will serve as a foundation for smarter salt management in every community.

Frequently Asked Questions

How does winter salt impact the environment?

While salt on our roads and sidewalks helps to keep us safe in the wintertime, it only takes one teaspoon of salt to permanently pollute 5 gallons of water. In particular, salt that enters the environment can raise sodium levels in our drinking water and harm fish, plants, and other wildlife that are adapted to freshwater environments.

Does excess winter salt financially impact our HOA?

Salts causes corrosion to vehicles and infrastructure, including sidewalks, roads, and bridges, and can lead to costly maintenance and repairs around your community. There are also a number of direct costs from winter salt application, including costs for materials (salt, brine, fuel etc.), equipment (trucks, plows, spreaders, etc.), and labor that increase with excess salt application. Without the use of optimal products and smart application practices, winter salt can result in greater costs to HOAs to maintain levels of service and replace infrastructure over time.

What actions can my HOA/civic association take to ensure smart salt management?

There are a number of ways that you can reduce the impacts of winter salt in your community:

- Engage member residents through workshops, newsletters, flyers, and other outreach tools to educate them about the environmental consequences of road salt and smart salting practices.
- Create a salt use policy that assesses current salt usage, adopts best practices for application, and ensures that your community is engaged around responsible salting practices.
- Develop a winter maintenance contract that reflects your salt use policy while also maintaining public safety and quality levels of service.
- Promote landscaping with native plants, which are typically more resilient to salt damage, and buffer zones to mitigate salt damage.

Developing a Smart Salting Policy

A salt use policy for an HOA or civic association outlines guidelines and best practices for the application of de-icing materials during winter months. Components of a policy may include assessment and monitoring guidelines, application practices, resident education, community involvement, and future adaptation. Overall, having a salt use policy helps to protect the environment and community health, while also enhancing property values, cost savings, and long-term sustainability. See below for two examples of these policies:

- [University of Wisconsin Madison Outdoor Salt Use Policy](#)
- [Village of Shorewood Hills Salt Use Policy](#)

Resident Education and Outreach

Smart salt management extends beyond coordination with winter snow and ice maintenance professionals. Communication and education to residents within your communities is vital to ensuring that residents are prepared for winter storm events but also understand the impacts of excess salt use on their surrounding environment. The following education and outreach resources can be shared with residents via emails, newsletters, printouts, and other formats to help spread the word on being #wintersaltsmart.

- [Winter Snow and Ice Maintenance Fact Sheet](#)
- [Fairfax Water: Winter Warrior Comic](#)
- [MWCOG #SmartSalt Infographic](#)
- [ICPRB: Winter Salt Smart StoryMap](#)
- [Winter Salt Impacts Infographic](#)
- [Winter Snow and Ice Management Tips Video](#)



Winter Maintenance Contracts

There are a number of factors to consider in the development of a winter maintenance contract, including costs, levels of service, and implementation of salt application best management practices. The following documents highlight example contracts and considerations to ensure an optimized level of service for your neighborhood's snow and ice maintenance needs.

- [Maryland Department of the Environment \(MDE\): Things to look out for in a Winter Maintenance Contract](#)
- [Minnesota Model Contract](#)
- [City of Edina Model Contract](#)

Additional Resources & Links

- [Virginia Salt Management Strategy Toolkit](#)
- [Interstate Commission for the Potomac River Basin \(ICPRB\): De-Icing Materials](#)
- [Minnesota Statewide Chloride Resources](#)
- [Wisconsin Salt Wise](#)
- [New Hampshire DES Salt Reduction Publications](#)
- [Arlington County Resources](#)
- [Fairfax County Guide to Snow](#)
- [Izaak Walton League of America: Salt Watch](#)
- [MWCOG Winter Salt Smart Resources](#)

Find these resources and more by scanning the QR code or visiting www.wintersaltsmart.com

