

Winter Service Provider Certification Programs

During the initial meeting of the Salt Management Strategy (SaMS) Non-Traditional Best Management Practices Workgroup, members requested additional information on existing winter service provider certification programs. In response to this request, ten winter service provider certification programs are described in this document. The program names are listed below with hyperlinks to additional information in this document. **Table 1** provides summary information about the programs for easy comparison.

- [Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's \(MPCA\) Smart Salting Certification](#)
- [New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services' \(NHDES\) Green SnowPro Training – NHDES Salt Applicator Certification](#)
- [Smart About Salt Council Certification](#)
- [City of Madison, Wisconsin Winter Salt Certification](#)
- [McHenry County, Illinois Sensible Salting Workshop and Certification](#)
- [Sustainable Winter Management \(SWiM\) Certification](#)
- [Snow and Ice Management Association \(SIMA\) Certified Snow Professional, Advanced Snow Manager](#)
- [Accredited Snow Contractors Association \(ASCA\) Certification](#)
- [American Public Works Association \(APWA\) Winter Maintenance Supervisor Certificate](#)
- [Association of Ontario Road Supervisors \(AORS\) Certified Road Supervisor, Winter Operation Training Series](#)

Table 1. Summary information for winter service provider certification programs. All programs (except SWiM, SIMA, ASCA, and APWA that did not have readily available information on the topic) address multiple surface types like roads, sidewalks, and driveways.

Program Name	Training			Reporting	Level		Cost [†]	Liability Protection
	In Person	Online	Exam		Organization	Individual		
MPCA's Smart Salting Certification	X*			X*	X*	X*		
NHDES Salt Applicator Certification	X		X	X		X	\$\$	X
Smart About Salt Council Certification	X	X	X	X	X*	X*	\$\$\$	
City of Madison, Wisconsin Winter Salt Certification	X		X	X*	X*	X	\$	

Program Name	Training			Reporting	Level		Cost [‡]	Liability Protection
	In Person	Online	Exam		Organization	Individual		
McHenry County, Illinois Sensible Salting Workshop and Certification	X		X			X	\$	
SWiM Certification	x			x	x		Variable	
SIMA Certified Snow Professional, Advanced Snow Manager		X	X			X	\$\$\$	
ASCA Certification		X	X			X	\$\$\$	X
APWA Winter Maintenance Supervisor Certificate	X		X			X	\$\$	
AORS Certified Road Supervisor, Winter Operation Training Series	X					X		

*Required for specific levels/types of certification

‡Cost breakdown:

- \$=<\$100
- \$\$=\$100-\$250
- \$\$\$=>\$250

Information not readily available

Each program is described in more detail below. Please note that much of the language describing programs is taken directly from online source materials. The accuracy of the information has not been verified. In some cases, edits were made to original language to make this document concise and pertinent for the intended purpose.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s (MPCA) Smart Salting Certification

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/smart-salting-training>

The Smart Salting Certification is conducted at two levels (Level 1 and Level 2).

Level 1 certification is for individuals like public road maintenance staff (state, city, and county), winter service providers, staff responsible for maintaining public and private walkways and/or parking lots, property managers, and other snowplow drivers. Level 1 certification includes attending an in-person training, held in Minnesota. Training manual and videos available [online](#).

Level 2 certification is for organizations and requires submission of data each year for the previous year. Level 2 reporting includes best management practices and salt savings assessments using the [Smart](#)

[Salting Assessment Tool](#) for the most recent fully completed winter maintenance season. To maintain certification, reports have to be submitted each year for the previous year. Individuals at the organization do not need to be Level 1 certified for the organization to become Level 2 certified. Level 2 certification is valid for 2 years. Organizations remain certified as long as they update and resubmit their best management practices and salt savings reports each year.

ICPRB staff reached out to MPCA staff for additional information on the content and re-certification process for the Level 1 training as well as the cost for both levels of training. This document will be updated as needed when/if additional information is received.

New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services' (NHDES) Green SnowPro Training – NHDES Salt Applicator Certification

<https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/was/salt-reduction-initiative/categories/faq.htm#two>

This certification program is for snow removing contractors, municipalities, and anyone running a plow. By completing the program, certified parties become eligible for liability protection for self and client from slips and falls per New Hampshire Code of Administrative Rules. To become a certified NHDES Salt Applicator, individuals must take a Green SnowPro workshop, pass the exam, and fill out the initial or renewal certification form. The initial course is five hours and covers proper salt use and efficiency issues related to winter maintenance. The training is held at various locations around New Hampshire. Annual [salt usage reporting](#) is also required for recertification. Additional information like storm-specific reporting can also be kept in the online system to ensure maximum liability protection.

For recertification, a new certification form must be submitted each year in June. A minimum of two hours of professional development courses are required every two years for recertification. This obligation can be met through a two-hour Green SnowPro refresher course, an Annual New Hampshire Salt Symposium, or a SIMA on-line refresher course.

There is no fee to apply for certification. The Green SnowPro trainings cost \$100 per person for municipalities and \$200 per person for private companies. The Green SnowPro refresher training is \$25 per person for municipalities and \$50 for private companies. Other professional development courses and the salt symposium have separate fees.

Smart About Salt Council Certification

<http://www.smartaboutsalt.com/becomesascertified>

The Smart About Salt Council is a non-profit organization that offers training to improve salting practices and protect freshwater from negative impacts of salting. This is a certification program for both contracting companies and sites and is valid for five years. Certification includes completing the Essentials of Salt Management training. Individual training and accreditation are also available. Training is available online or as a one-day in-person class. An example training course agenda is available [online](#). To maintain certification, an annual report is required and random program verifications may be conducted. Online course registration including all modules, review, and exam is \$375. Businesses in certain locations may qualify for stormwater credits to save on monthly utility bill.

City of Madison, Wisconsin Winter Salt Certification

<https://wisaltwise.com/Winter-Salt-Certification>

This is a voluntary certification program open to all Dane County contractors that discusses parking lots, roads, sidewalks, and driveways. Certification is available for both individuals and organizations.

The individual certification includes a six-hour training and a written exam. To become certified, the individual must also agree to use practices that reduce impacts on the environment. Two types of individual trainings offered are the roads class for high/low speed snowplow drivers and the parking lot/sidewalk class for those who maintain private/public walkways and/or parking lots and service roads. Individual certification lasts 5 years. The class includes the chemistry or salt use, recommended salt application rates, how to calculate the amount of salt needed based on weather conditions, and technological advancements like brining, new spreading equipment, and alternative products.

The organizational certification requires 30% of the salt related staff to be certified and submission of an annual report. The organizational certification is valid for 1 year. Organizational certification includes 1) submission and acceptance of the application that describes current de-icing practices, 2) hands on equipment calibration training, 3) tracking use of salt per storm, and 4) submission of an annual salt savings report.

ICPRB staff reached out to staff in Madison, Wisconsin for additional information on the costs of certification and the re-certification process for individuals. There is a \$12 registration fee for the certification training for parking lots, sidewalks, and trail maintenance professionals currently listed on the website. This document will be updated as needed when/if additional information is received.

McHenry County, Illinois Sensible Salting Workshop and Certification

<https://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/county-government/departments-i-z/planning-development/water-resources/sensible-salting>

This certification is for public and private sector employees responsible for maintenance of roads, sidewalks, and parking lots in McHenry County, Illinois. Trainings and certification workshops are hosted through the University of Wisconsin, McHenry County, or the American Public Works Association. The training topics include application rates, liquids, weather conditions, materials storage, levels of service, truck washing, new maintenance methods, environmental effects, state/local law, and NPDES compliance. It also includes demonstration/hands-on discussion of calibrating equipment. Operators are required to be recertified every three years. Refresher courses are offered annually. The training costs \$25.

Sustainable Winter Management (SWiM) Certification

<http://witadvisers.com/swim/>

The SWiM Certification is administered through a private firm, WIT Advisers, that consults with property owners, municipalities and contractors. SWiM is a systematized approach to implementation of efficient practices that includes policy guidelines and standards of practice, the nuts and bolts. There are three types of certifications offered through the SWiM program: a) *SITE* certification, b) *ROAD* certification, and c) *CF* Certification (Chloride Free). Trainings are provided for property owners, managers, contractors, highway departments, and public officials. The program includes a needs assessment, implementation training, program management, automated monitoring, and SWiM certification. Maintaining certification includes operations audits and monitoring of salt tracking and level of service.

SWiM certified SITES and ROADS require automated monitoring (ongoing tracking of salt use and level of service achieved through SITE / ROAD weather cameras). Periodic monitoring includes engagement with contractors, highway operators, property owners, and public officials to improve performance and reduce salt use by implementing more efficient practices. In addition to automated monitoring, random in-person/on-site audits are performed with contractors, highway operators, and property owners.

A future certification / accreditation for contractors (service companies) is being considered for contractors who follow SWiM guidelines and service a minimum number of SWiM sites.

Snow and Ice Management Association (SIMA) Certified Snow Professional, Advanced Snow Manager

<https://www.sima.org/education/certified-snow-professional/certified-snow-professional-faq>

SIMA is a non-profit trade association. The certification program is designed for business owners and executives. It is focused on business elements like marketing, human resources, snow-specific operations, and legal aspects. Annual continuing education is required to maintain good standing.

Certification is for individuals only, not for companies. The certification of an individual's competence is accomplished through a written exam. The 200-question exam is designed to measure the individual's knowledge in six areas: Business, Human Resource Management, Marketing, Sub-Contractors, Snow and Ice Science, and Snow and Ice Operations and Techniques. Exams are given online once per month through [SIMA's Training Center](#). A candidate will determine eligibility, complete an application and submit any necessary application materials, be approved by SIMA, and then take the exam.

This certification program does not require records of salt use or BMP implementation.

The exam fee is \$350 for SIMA members and \$500 for non-members. The fee must be paid before taking the exam. Study materials cost: \$300 for the set of six, or \$400 for the set of six plus the recorded study presentations for members. Non-members pay \$400 for the set of six, or \$500 for the set of six plus the recorded study presentations.

Recertification requires an annual renewal fee of \$130 to SIMA. Fifteen continuing education credits are also required per year, starting the year after initial certification. Credits can be obtained through

various activities such as educational seminars, SIMA's annual symposium, publishing industry related articles, and mentoring new SIMA members.

Accredited Snow Contractors Association (ASCA) Certification

<https://www.ascaonline.org/>

This certification program was designed to help address the rising cost of comprehensive insurance coverage. The ASCA worked with Mills Insurance Group to develop the ASCA certification. Certified members are provided with access to insurance programs that offer exclusive discounts to ASCA members.

Snow and ice professionals who complete 10 hours of ASCA-approved educational programming and are ASCA members in good standing earn the designation "ASCA Certified." Topics are listed on the ASCA [website](#). Each course includes a presentation followed by a short quiz. Once the quiz is passed, the course is completed and a certificate-of-completion document is issued. ASCA provides an all-encompassing certificate for achieving initial certification and for renewal. Certification is renewed on an annual basis and requires the completion of 10 hours of ASCA-approved education to meet the renewal requirements.

Each hour course is \$15. ASCA membership costs are based on annual snow revenue, ranging from \$200-\$400 for a one-year membership.

American Public Works Association (APWA) Winter Maintenance Supervisor Certificate

<http://www3.apwa.net/learn/Certificates/Winter-Maintenance-Supervisor-Certificate>

This certification program is designed to be held annually at The North American Snow Conference. Participants include supervisors with winter maintenance responsibilities, operators who aspire to be supervisors, and operators who want a greater understanding of winter maintenance processes.

Training topics include:

- Expand knowledge of planning and preparation in winter maintenance operations
- Increase understanding of winter weather and how it affects operations
- Identify how to better use traditional and alternative chemicals
- Consider what equipment is available and how to maintain it
- Expand understanding of snow and ice control techniques
- Gain understanding about the environmental impacts of winter maintenance policies

The winter maintenance supervisor certificate workshop costs \$25 in addition to conference registration. The most recent conference registration cost \$225.

Association of Ontario Road Supervisors (AORS) Certified Road Supervisor, Winter Operation Training Series

<http://aors.on.ca/education/winter-operation-series/>

Ontario has a certification program designed for various kinds of snow operators and public works employees. The trainings are developed and delivered by Ground Force Training, Inc. [Ground Force Training](#) is a Canadian heavy equipment and driver training company, providing heavy equipment training to townships, counties, districts and rural municipalities as well as private industries including farms, construction and utility companies

Many of the trainings for different types of plow operators (listed below) cover topics related to smart salting:

- Front end loader plot
- Motor grader-snowplow
- Pick-up truck with plow
- Sidewalk plow
- Snow plow defensive driving course
- Snow plow operator 1.2
- Snowplow – classroom only
- Snowplow – one person plowing
- Tractor loader backhoe snowplow
- Winter patroller

This document was prepared by the [Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin](#) using readily available web-based information.