



Although we rely on winter salt use to help us safely move around during a weather event, when the salt is done working it causes negative impacts to our drinking water, vehicles, infrastructure and environment throughout Northern Virginia. We can all do our part and learn to be #WinterSaltSmart using the tips in this guide.

What should you do before a storm?

- ▶ Have your shovel or snow blower ready.
- ▶ Make sure you have the necessary provisions to stay home for a few days.
- ▶ Prepare your salt and/or materials to provide traction and store them indoors.

For more information

Visit our #WinterSaltSmart tips for residents at [websitegoeshere.com](http://www.websitegoeshere.com).



Resident's Guide to Smart Salting



What to do during and after a storm?

- ▶ Clear snow by shoveling early and often, and apply salt only where needed.
- ▶ Apply salt *after* clearing snow. Never use salt to “burn off” snow. It will quickly dilute and requires more salt.
 - » Salts should be applied as follows:
 - » Sodium chloride “rock salt”: A handful per square yard or nine square feet. Aim for about three inches between pieces. (See Figure 1.)
 - » Calcium chloride: a handful per three square yards or 27 square feet.
 - » *Note: when applying dry material, it’s best to use a hand spreader, like those used for fertilizer.*
- ▶ Be patient and give the salt time to work. The colder it is, the longer it will take for the salt to melt what snow or ice remains after shoveling.
- ▶ If the sun comes out and you can wait, let the sun do some of the work before you apply salt.
- ▶ If it is too cold for your salt to work, or you’d rather not use salt, use traction materials instead, like sand, wood ash, or native bird seed.
- ▶ After the storm, sweep up the extra salt or traction material and use it again next time.

Figure 1

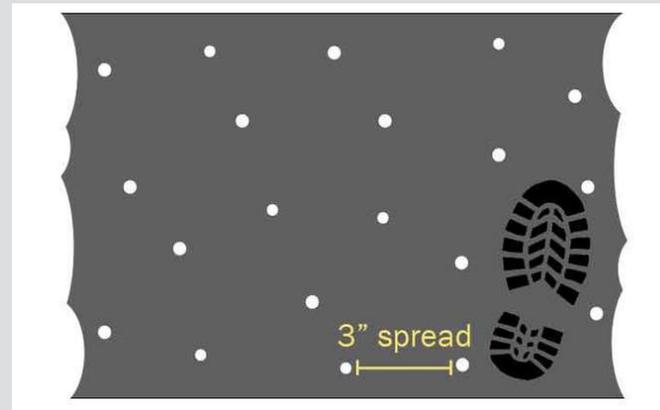


Image Credit: Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization

Can salt be applied before a storm?

- ▶ Yes, this prevents the snow and ice from sticking to the pavement.
 - » Mix a little over two pounds of sodium chloride (NaCl or rock salt) into a gallon of water and pour into a sprayer. Apply at one liquid ounce per square yard or nine square feet.
 - » *Note: One pound of salt is about equal to a 12-ounce coffee mug.*
- ▶ You can also apply dry salt before a storm using the same amounts indicated in “What to do during and after a storm?”

Choosing the right salt

Below is a table with the lowest temperatures that the more common salts will work. Salts that do not contain chloride are more expensive, but have less of an impact on the environment.

Type of Salt	Chemical	Lowest Temperature the Salt Will Work
Salts that contain chloride	NaCl (sodium chloride), also called “rock salt”	15 F
	MgCl ₂ (magnesium chloride)	-10 F
	CaCl ₂ (calcium chloride)	-20 F
	KCl (potassium chloride)	25 F
Salts that do not contain chloride	CMA (calcium magnesium acetate)	20 F
	KAc (potassium acetate)	-15 F

Always read the ingredients to determine what is legitimately “safe,” “pet-safe” and “environmentally friendly.” Any materials that contain nitrogen or phosphorus are illegal to sell in Virginia.