



The good and the bad of winter de-icers

Information from Greener Bloomfield and the NY Landmarks Conservancy

Get ready for winter's ice with a de-icing plan for sidewalks, steps and drive-ways. Many commercial de-icing products are tough on man-made and natural environments. Masonry is especially vulnerable.



Bad Choices

Sodium chloride, also known as rock salt, is the most common de-icing salt. It releases the highest amount of chloride when it dissolves. Chloride can damage concrete and metal, and it pollutes streams, rivers and lakes. It severely damages concrete that is less than six months old.

Calcium chloride comes in rounded white pellets. It can irritate skin if your hands are moist when handling it. Concentrated calcium chloride can chemically attack concrete. It severely damages concrete that is less than six months old.

Ammonium nitrate and ammonium sulfate products should never be used since they will break down the most durable masonry materials.

Fertilizers sometimes sold as de-icers and traction agents contain nitrate and ammonium sulfate. They can rapidly disintegrate concrete.



Good Choices

Magnesium chloride (best choice) is the newest de-icing salt. It melts snow and ice down to minus 13° F. It releases 40% less chloride than rock salt or calcium chloride and is far less damaging to concrete and plants.

Potassium chloride (good choice) does not irritate skin or harm vegetation. It melts ice when the temperature is above 15° F. Combined with other chemicals, it can melt ice at even lower temperatures.

Sand can be mixed with equal parts of any deicer to provide grit for traction.

About Greener Bloomfield

Meetings are held the first Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Civic Center. Learn more at greenerbloomfield.org or [facebook@greenerbloomfield](https://facebook.com/greenerbloomfield).