

Working to Keep Roads Safe while Protecting our Waters this Winter

Whether you're a fan of the snow or were secretly hoping the mild fall would continue right into spring, winter is upon us and the Village of Elm Grove crews are ready. Prior to the snow season, the DPW employees survey their routes for hazards, low hanging branches, manholes that need repair as well as mark corners and intersections as needed to help guide them during a snow event. Time is spent setting up trucks and snow removal equipment to ensure everything is ready to go.

Each year, plow drivers attend meetings and training relative to snow removal and deicing. Our goal is to keep roads, parking lots and sidewalks safe this winter by using the right amount of salt. More isn't always better, especially when it comes to winter salt use. Excess salt can harm plants and animals, pollute our water, damage buildings and corrode vehicles, roads and bridges. Did you know that 1 teaspoon of salt can pollute 5 gallons of water? Once you put salt down, it doesn't go away. Instead, it travels into our lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands, putting our aquatic life at risk and endangering our freshwater resources. The good news is that a little salt can go a long ways if applied properly.

The Village of Elm Grove is using sensible salting practices such as applying salt brine before the storm (known as anti-icing), then focusing on mechanical removal of snow (plowing) before applying the salt to reduce waste and overuse. Once the snow is removed from the roadway, the salt is applied on an as needed basis to intersections, hills and curves for safety.

What is Brine and Anti-icing? - Ever see trucks on road before it starts to snow and wonder, "Why are they spraying those lines on the street when it's not even snowing yet?" Think of the brine as a pretreatment for our roads. The brine lines help the snow melt on contact and prevent the snow and ice from sticking to the roads so crews can easily remove it later with the plow. Learn to "Love the lines", they are there to minimize the impact of the chlorides in deicers on our natural resources.

These practices allow us to keep roads, parking lots and sidewalks safe while reducing salt use and our impact to the Underwood Creek, Menomonee River and finally Lake Michigan. Join us in our effort to become "Salt Wise" by taking some simple actions this winter:

- **Shovel:** Clear walkways and other areas before the snow turns to ice. The more snow you remove manually, the less salt you will have to use and the more effective it will be.
- **Scatter:** Believe it or not, just a coffee mug of salt is enough to treat an entire 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares.
- **Switch:** When pavement temps drop below 15, salt won't work. Switch to sand for traction or a different ice melter that works in lower temperatures (i.e. Calcium chloride, magnesium chloride, etc.).
- **Hire a salt wise applicator:** If you hire a contractor to remove snow and ice, let them know you are WI Salt Wise! Some local applicators have been trained in winter maintenance practices that reduce environmental impact. Ask if they've been trained and what practices they use.
- **Look** for proper salt use at the stores & businesses you visit. If they're using the right amount of salt, tell them thank you! If not, let them know about WI Salt Wise.

- **Be Salt Wise All Year:** The salt you put in your water softener ends up in local fresh-water streams. New, efficient softeners use less than one bag per month. If you're using more, have a professional tune up your softener or invest in a new, high-efficiency model.

Find out more at www.wisaltwise.com

Other things that can be done to help our DPW during Snow Season:

- 1.) Please do not push snow across the road or pile it at the road edge where it will migrate out and encroach on the drive lanes. We need to keep our roads accessible for traffic and emergency vehicle response. Property owners and contractors can be cited for this by the Police Dept.
- 2.) Please do not place anything in the ROW along the road edge other than a breakaway snow marker. This can be fiberglass or aluminum, but no metal stakes or rocks.

