RESPECT OUR WATERS

Ice and Snow Control

Winter time is an important time for the health of our rivers and lakes. With the amount of snow and ice on the roads, salt and sand are added in liberal quantities to provide some safety for drivers, bikers, pedestrians. Unfortunately, the salt and other chemicals can cause major problems when melting ice and snow carries them into our storm drains and directly out into the watershed. Road salt is also corrosive and can damage vehicles and infrastructure.

Here are some winter tips that make a difference for water quality:

- Don't overuse salt and other deicing chemicals! These may seem harmless, but when they dissolve, they flow into storm drains that lead directly to our rivers and lake.
- Once salt enters a body of water, it is extremely difficult to remove and high salinity is toxic to aquatic life, birds, and other organisms. A good guide to follow is to use a coffee mug full of salt for every 10 sidewalk squares or 20 feet of driveway.
- Take preventative measures to reduce salt usage. If possible, shovel necessary areas throughout snowfall. This will reduce the amount of salt needed and make it more effective. If the ice is thicker than ½", salting won't be helpful - use a heavy ice chopper instead.
- If the temperature dips below 15 degrees Fahrenheit, road salt won't work. Use sand for traction or an alternative ice melt product that is effective at colder temps.
- Take your car to the shop to ensure that it is running smoothly and not leaking chemicals that could end up in our waterways. It is easy to miss small leakages in the winter so take a minute to inspect your vehicle regularly.
- Sweep up excess salt or sand after every storm. Not only will you keep it out of the storm sewers, you'll be able to use it again and save money in the process!
- If you hire help for snow removal, please ask your contractor to use salt sparingly, use sand or another alternative, or perform more manual labor to reduce ice formation.

Quick tip!

Looking for an easy way to reduce your impact? Check out alternatives to traditional road salt! There are many alternative options that have a lower impact on water quality available including sand, vinegar solutions ,and other de-icing products available.

This information was brought to you by Southeastern Wisconsin Watersheds Trust, Inc. in accordance with WDNR NR.216

Get more information online at **RespectOurWaters.org**