

WINTER STORM MAINTENANCE

THE SALTY SIDE EFFECTS OF MELTING SNOW!

Winter is a wonderful time of year to enjoy family and the warmth of home as the snow begins to fall and accumulate outside. With the accumulation of snow, outdoor activities like sledding, ice skating, and skiing can be enjoyed by all who are adventurous enough to brave the frigid weather and potentially slippery roads. The common practice of applying salt though effective comes at a price. The salt we spread doesn't just disappear once the snow melts, in fact, that's when the salt begins its journey into our waterways.



SALT FACTS:

- In Pennsylvania, the state roads and highways managed by PennDOT alone use over **800,000 tons of salt and 8 million gallons of salt brine**.
- When snow melts, the resulting water dissolves the salt into sodium and chloride which is usually carried through storm drains. The high levels of sodium and chloride can be **toxic** to aquatic life and can negatively impact our ecosystem.
- A study out of Maryland demonstrated that no brook trout were found in waterways that exceed 280 mg/L of chloride.
- Another study found that some streams in Pennsylvania contained more than 1,000 mg/L of chloride!
- The salt which does not enter storm drains still has the potential to infiltrate soils and groundwater, causing **harm to our ecosystem**.
- Vegetation is not typically tolerable of salt, which consequently leads to the **death of many native plants** after winter.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Use salt more **sparingly**
- **Shovel** early and often
- Dump shoveled snow into a **vegetated area** to prevent excessive runoff into the storm drain
- Use **salt alternatives** for de-icing such as sand, ash, or beet juice
- Limit home access to **one entrance** to reduce de-icing areas
- Use **commercial car washes** to remove accumulated salt off your vehicle



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Source information for this article provided by
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