

# Manage your winter salt on commercial properties



## Improve winter maintenance and safety

Whether you clear your snow or hire someone to do it, you are responsible for the safety of others on your property. Because safety is number one, you reach for what has always worked – salt.

However salt can create more problems than it solves. Salt can damage concrete, kill landscapes, destroy flooring and carpets. Most importantly, salt harms our community's drinking water.

And as we experience more extreme weather including freezing rain, the need for salt will increase.



Salt should never be your first or only line of defense to deal with snow and ice. Salt can be part of the answer, but using it correctly can protect you and our water.

Start with a complete winter maintenance plan. Following a plan can reduce the risk of slip and fall hazards, reduce repairs from salt damage and can help keep salt out of our water.

Keep reading to learn about eight ways you can improve your winter maintenance plan. Then visit the Region of Waterloo website for resources.

[www.regionofwaterloo.ca/winterplan](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/winterplan)

## Eight ways to improve your winter maintenance plan

1. **Review your winter maintenance contract.** Make sure your agreement includes salt training for anyone salting your property, access to the contractor's application records and a review of how you're billed for your salt. Salt charged by unit price per event or lump sum per season, instead of by unlimited use, ensures both a practical and economical use of salt.
2. **Document what you do.** In case of a slip and fall, keeping good records helps prove you have taken reasonable steps to protect everyone on the property. Record keeping may include logs for weather, site conditions, training, material application and spreader calibrations.
3. **Take salt training.** Training provides your team with the know how to maintain safety no matter what Mother Nature throws at you. The Smart About Salt™ Council offers online training at [www.smartaboutsalt.com](http://www.smartaboutsalt.com).
4. **Prevent ice from forming.** Stop stormwater and melted snow from freezing across paved areas. A rainy day is the perfect time to watch the water running on your property to understand how stormwater pools and drains. Redirect downspouts away from walkways and parking lots, fix leaky eaves troughs and keep eaves troughs and storm drains clear. Locate your snow pile on the lower section of the property near a storm drain.
5. **Close areas instead of salting.** Reduce your risk from potential slip and fall hazards by closing areas not needed in the winter. This may include outdoor patios, overflow parking and extra walkways and stairs.
6. **Stop snow from drifting on to paved areas.** Landscaping or snow fences can help keep drifting snow off paved areas and reduce icy areas from forming due to wind. Consider wind direction and elevation changes when choosing locations.
7. **Have a plan for colder temperatures.** Salt works best between 0° and -10° Celsius. Do you have a plan to deal with ice when it's too cold for salt to work, such as switching to sand? Sand won't melt the ice but will create traction to reduce the potential to slip.
8. **Clean up spilled and excess salt.** Store salt in a water resistant closed container and clean up spilled and excess applied salt to save for another time. Display reminders near storage bins to encourage the responsible use of salt.

Alternate formats of this document available upon request.

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**Region of Waterloo, Water Services**

519-575-4400 (TTY: 519-575-4608)  
[www.regionofwaterloo.ca/water](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/water)

Email: [waterservices@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:waterservices@regionofwaterloo.ca)  
Find us on Facebook: /ROWWaterServices