

BEST PRACTICES



DE-ICER...What is the Best Choice for Salmon, Pets and Plants?

During the icy months, the best option for de-icing driveways and sidewalks is the snow shovel- it's completely non-chemical, but we recognize that it is not always practical as the only method of ice control. The next best solution is limited and proper use of chemical de-icers. Shoveling and de-icing is crucial for maintaining safe roads, walkways, parking lots and driveways. Unfortunately, many chemicals used in de-icers can pollute streams, lakes and even drinking water supplies if used improperly. They can also harm pets, plants, flooring materials and auto bodies.

Historically, salt and/or sand was used as de-icers, but salt was found to be corrosive and harmful to plant and aquatic systems. Sand, which is chemical free, can be harmful to salmon and other aquatic life when it is swept up by rain or melting snow. The sand can get carried into nearby streams where salmon eggs have been carefully covered with gravel by female salmon. The fine sediment can clog the spaces between the gravel and suffocate the developing salmon. Fine sediment can also clog the gills of salmon and other fish and aquatic organisms that breathe through gills.

Today, there is a variety of chemical de-icers that are less corrosive; however, even these products have a wide range of impacts to water quality, plants, birds, mammals (including pets) and aquatic organisms. The various chemical salts used in de-icers can create a salt-toxic environment for plants, mammals and aquatic organisms.



*For a general description of common chemical de-icers go to
<http://davesgarden.com/guides/articles/view/1954/>*

*For a scientific study of the impacts of de-icers go to
www.newyorkwater.org/downloadedArticles/ENVIRONMENTANIMPACT.cfm*

As mentioned before, the next best solution is to carefully follow the instructions on the bag, especially in determining the amount to apply. It is important to use the minimum amount of deicer necessary, and to remove the snow/ice with a shovel or plow before it melts. The melting snow/ice water is now polluted and can run off into stormdrains and/or the nearest body of water. Remove treated, melting snow to a pervious area like grass or landscaped area.

Thanks for doing your part to keep pollution out of stormwater and to prevent stormwater flooding!

Did You Know?

It is illegal to put anything other than rain or melting snow into a stormwater drainage facility, such as a storm drain, drainage ditch, swale or stormwater pond?

The Cities of Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater and Thurston County have all adopted and enforce Illicit Discharge ordinances that prevent the discharge of pollutants into storm drainage facilities. Violators can be fined to to \$1,000 per violation if they fail to stop the discharge and clean up the pollutants. The jurisdictions have adopted these codes to comply with a Department of Ecology permit issued under the Federal Clean Water Act, known as the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.

In the event of an accidental spill, or to report illegal dumping you can:

- Contact your local jurisdiction's stormwater program.
- Call the Hazardous Waste Hotline at 360-867-2664 (Mon. - Fri., 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)
- Call the Department of Ecology's Emergency 24-Hour Spill Hotline at 360-407-6300 (large-scale spills).

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