The Watershed Center
GRAND TRAVERSE BAY

SALT GUIDE

for responsible salt use that reduces chloride pollution in our water.

OUR WATER.
OUR RESPONSIBILITY.

The salt we use on roads, driveways, sidewalks, and parking lots carries chloride into our lakes, streams, and groundwater. Even a small amount of salt can add enough chloride to harm plants and wildlife, corrode infrastructure, and threaten drinking water. By using salt wisely, we can help protect the freshwater we all depend on.

Explore our online resource guide to learn more about how the choices we make each winter can keep our freshwater healthier for people, pets, and wildlife.

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SPOTLIGHT ON KIDS CREEK

Chloride from salt use is contributing to the water quality impairment of Kids Creek, a cold-water trout stream in Traverse City. Monitoring data confirm that chloride concentrations increase to harmful levels toxic to aquatic life during winter and early spring when chloride is washed from pavement and snow piles into nearby waters.

Understanding when and how chloride enters Kids Creek will help guide solutions that protect Kids Creek while still keeping us safe during winter.

RESPONSIBLE SALT USE

SHOVEL

Clear walkways, driveways, and parking areas before snow becomes compacted or turns to ice. The more snow you remove the less salt you will need and the more effective it will be.

SCATTER

When using salt, spread the crystals about 3 inches apart so they are spaced out rather than piled up. A single coffee cup of salt can treat a 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares.

SWITCH

When temperatures fall below 15°F, chloride-based salt is not effective. At colder temperatures, switch to sand for traction or use an ice melt product designed for lower temperatures.

SWEEP

Sweep up any unused salt and save it for next time. Reusing dry salt helps limit concrete damage and keeps excess chloride from washing into nearby streams and lakes.

EGLE
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