



To see how you can make a difference at home and in your community, contact the Clinton River Watershed Council and ask for the complete stormwater tip card series. Or, for more information, visit our website at www.crwc.org.

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A Citizen's Guide to Cold Weather Practices

Winter brings with it lots of fun activities, like sledding, ice skating and skiing. But winter also means mounds of snow to shovel and layers of ice to remove from our sidewalks and driveways. We often make the job easier by applying deicers like salt. Besides sodium chloride, many deicers also contain chemicals like cyanide. When ice melts, the salts and chemicals dissolve and flow into street drains that lead directly to the river, endangering aquatic life. Look inside for a few tips to reduce salt use and prevent pollution year-round.





Help prevent stormwater pollution this winter!

There are two approaches to reducing stormwater pollution from household salt use:

1. Try an alternative!

Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) was developed as a deicing alternative because it has fewer adverse environmental impacts than salt and doesn't cause corrosion. Although CMA is more expensive than rock salt, it is recommended for environmentally sensitive areas.

2. Reduce your salt use.

By limiting the amount of salt we use on sidewalks and driveways, we can reduce the amount of polluted stormwater washing into our waterways.

The most important step in deicing is to physically remove as much ice as possible before applying salt. Use a shovel to break up the ice before you add another layer of salt to your sidewalk. Adding more salt without removing what has melted can result in over-application, meaning more salt and chemicals end up in the river.

You can also reduce salt use by limiting access to your home to one entrance. For every doorway that is not used, there will be less salt running into the catch basin in your street.



Help keep our rivers healthy year-round!



WINTER

Besides limiting the amount of salt you use to melt ice, start thinking about adding native plants to your yard this spring. Plants native to Michigan have deeper roots than turfgrass, so they help absorb stormwater and filter out pollutants.



SPRING

Along with adding natives to your landscape, take care of the lawn you already have by keeping your grass about three inches tall. Taller grass cools the soil, needs less water and shades out weed growth. It is also more insect and disease resistant!



SUMMER

Conserve water by using only what your lawn needs. By watering late in the afternoon, water will reach roots more easily and won't evaporate as quickly in the hot summer sun. Also make sure your sprinkler is watering your lawn — not your driveway or sidewalk!



FALL

Rather than bagging all of your leaves for disposal, try composting. Compost piles are easy to make, and you'll end up with rich, earthy fertilizer for your lawn and garden!

For more healthy lawn and garden tips, contact the Michigan State University Extension Master Gardener Hotline in your county.