

Water Quality



Water quality is a year-round issue and during the winter in Anchorage that means keeping harmful substances out of the snow so they don't run off into our waterways when the snow melts.

MELTING ICE

Your winter salting and sanding practices can affect spring water quality. When purchasing ice melt this winter, consider which type will work best for your application while doing the least amount of harm. There are more than 100 brands of ice melt product but all use either one or a combination of only a handful of active ingredients. Unfortunately, many packages don't provide information about their chemical composition so you may need to do some web research, but check before you buy to find the right one.

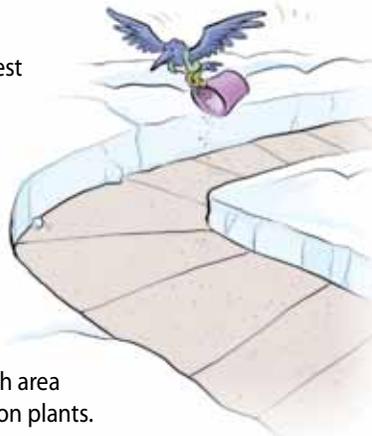
The details can be complicated but here is some general information to point you in the right direction. First, it's important to understand the purpose of ice melt, which is to form a liquid brine to melt enough to break the bond between the snow/ice and the pavement so the snow/ice can be shoveled away. The product must reach the pavement to become effective. It is not meant to melt away the snow/ice so don't expect this to happen or add more salt if it is not happening.

In general, calcium chloride is recommended over sodium chloride (basic rock salt or road salt). It can be used in lower concentrations, it works at lower temperatures (-20° to -25°F), and it is somewhat less damaging to the environment. Drawbacks include expense compared to rock salt. Even more expensive, but much less toxic and corrosive, CMA is your best bet for keeping your family, pets, lawn, driveway, and our waterways safe.

Ice Melt Material	Price Range	Corrosiveness	Environmental Impact	Minimum Temperature
Sodium Chloride (rock salt)	\$	Severe	Severe	5° to 20°F
Calcium Chloride	\$\$	Severe	Moderate	-25°F
Magnesium Chloride	\$\$	Moderate	Low	5°F
Potassium Chloride	\$\$\$	Moderate	Moderate	12°F
Urea	\$\$\$	Low	Moderate	15°F
Sodium Acetate	\$\$\$	Moderate	Low	0°F
Calcium Magnesium Acetate (CMA)	\$\$\$\$	Low	Low	5° to 20°F

Ice Melt Tips

- Apply early! Before or just as snow starts to fall is the best time to apply ice melt for maximum effectiveness.
- Do not over apply; follow instructions on the label. Use only the quantities necessary to do the job.
- Do not try to melt everything. Clear snow first if applying after snow has fallen.
- Wear gloves. Ice melts are an irritant.
- Do not use on new concrete that has not fully cured.
- All products have some effect on the environment. Flush area with water if over-use is suspected or damage appears on plants.
- Mix with traction products to use less.
- Remember, when temps fall below the teens, many of the products are ineffective so don't waste time and money using them in extreme cold.
- Keep away from pets.



SCOOPING POOP

Dog waste is a nuisance and a health hazard. It spreads disease and is one of the largest causes of water pollution in Anchorage streams and creeks. Scooping poop isn't just a spring and summer activity. Dog waste can easily disappear under the snow in the winter – out of sight, out of mind, until spring when it is released all at once during break-up.



Anchorage has an estimated 65,000 dogs, each producing an average of 3/4 of a pound of waste per day. That's more than 48,000 pounds or about 24 tons of dog waste each and every day. If none of us cleaned up after our dog this winter, the spring melt could potentially release more than 4,000 tons of poop into our waterways! The most effective way to avoid this problem is to scoop poop throughout the winter.

Anchorage has a municipal ordinance requiring pet owners to clean up after their pets, both at home and in public places. Many city parks now have convenient refuse stations. But just in case there is not one at your park, or in case the bag dispenser is empty, you should always carry a supply of plastic bags to clean up after your dog. Most pet stores sell handy dispensers that can clip onto your leash, or simply tie a plastic newspaper sleeve or plastic grocery bag to the handle of your leash.

Poop Scooping Tips

- Slip a plastic bag over your hand and collect the droppings.
- Pull the bag off of your hand so that the droppings are inside (like pulling off a sock cuff-first).
- Tie the bag shut and dispose of it in a trash can or animal refuse station.
- Check http://anchoragecreeks.org/pages/poop_stations.php for an interactive map of all the animal refuse stations in Anchorage.
- When cleaning up waste at home, double bag it before placing it in your trash.