

Water Softeners

Water conditioning equipment uses salt to produce soft water, and nearly all the salt used re-enters the environment as chloride.

A time-clock softening system that automatically regenerates every few days can use more than 1,000 pounds of salt in a year. During regeneration, softeners discharge a salty backwash into a septic or sewer system, neither of which removes salt. That salt then goes into the ground or a stream, where it pollutes our groundwater and waterways.

How you can save \$100s a year and reduce pollution:

- Adjust the time-clock to recycle less often
- Upgrade to an on-demand model that is more salt efficient
- Check for running toilets, which use up soft water
- Contact a Water Quality Association certified water conditioning contractor for maintenance

Be Salt Smart

The water supply in the BACOG area is recharged locally, which means what you put on the ground today could be in the water you drink tomorrow.

Increasing chloride levels from salt threaten our only source of drinking water as well as our natural environment, a defining characteristic of the BACOG area.

Look for ways to reduce the amount of salt that enters the environment. Be frugal with salt application on driveways and walkways and consider changing your water softener to a unit with lower salt consumption.

Learn More at BACOG



www.bacog.org



bacog@bacog.org



+1 847 381 7871



112 Algonquin Road
Barrington Hills, IL 60010

The Barrington Area Council of Governments is a regional planning organization whose members include the villages of Barrington, Barrington Hills, Deer Park, Lake Barrington, South Barrington and Tower Lakes, and Barrington Township.

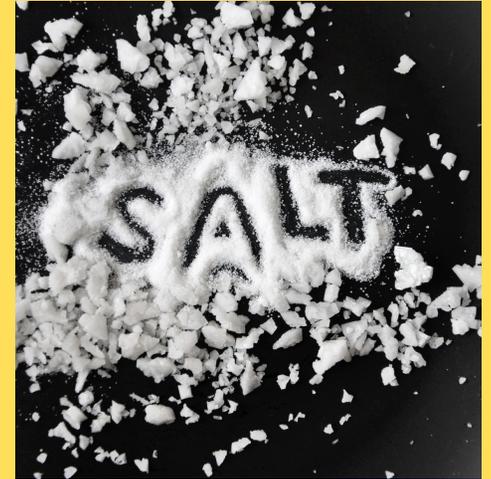


Barrington Area Council Of Governments

SOURCES
www.wisaltwise.com
www.wqa.org

Know Your Water

Salt Smart Edition



Barrington Area Council Of Governments

www.bacog.org

Why Talk About Salt?

Salt (sodium chloride) is among the earth's most abundant and essential minerals. Whether in the form of table salt or rock salt, too much of it can have significant impacts on our health, pets, wildlife, water supplies and environment.

Salt is water soluble, and its chloride component is not removed by any natural or chemical process. Once it is in the water, it remains there.

It takes only 1 teaspoon of salt to pollute 5 gallons of water.



Impacts on the Environment

Salt can enter the environment from using it in water softeners and from salting roads and pavements. The chloride builds up in lakes, streams and wetlands, and chloride levels in groundwater are steadily increasing as well.

Chloride from salt usage impacts our environment by:

- Contaminating groundwater, which is the source of private well and municipal drinking water
- Damaging trees and vegetation
- Harming birds, fish, plants, aquatic organisms and ecosystems
- Pitting driveways, walks and patio surfaces
- Rusting cars, bridges and other infrastructure

The longer we wait to reduce salt use, the worse these problems will become.

Winter Salting

Road salt is used during the winter months to loosen ice and snow on driveways and walks. It is not intended to melt all of the snow and ice.

You can help reduce the amount of salt entering the environment at your home or business:

- Shovel early to remove snow and ice manually
- Limit the amount of salt used
- Sprinkle sand instead of salt
- When the temperature drops below 15°F, rock salt does not work. Use magnesium chloride or calcium chloride - they do work and have lower concentrations of chloride



Did you know a 12 oz. coffee mug full of salt is enough to treat a 20 ft. driveway?

Over-Salting

Road and pavement salting is by far the largest contributor to chloride contamination of water. Up to 90% of the salt used for deicing can enter the soil, groundwater and surface water.

Read instructions on your salting product to ensure proper application rates and prevent over-salting. Sweep up excessive salt and re-use.

Correct Salt Distribution



Photo from wisaltwise.com

Incorrect Salt Distribution



Photo by Rudy Pajares (waterkeeper.ca)

Lower Your Expectations

Roadway and parking lot managers must balance maintaining the public safety with minimizing environmental impacts from salt.

Lower your expectations for completely clear pavement, and remember:

- Be patient. Just because you don't see salt doesn't mean the road hasn't been treated
- Parking lots at stores and businesses should not have excessive salt application - if too much salt is being used, speak up!
- Make sure your snowplow contractor calibrates equipment to use the proper amount of salt
- Support your government's efforts to reduce the amount of salt used on local roads

Protect Your Pets

Road salt and other de-icing products can be hazardous to your pets. These products can irritate their paws and cause health problems if ingested. Whenever possible, avoid walking your pet near sidewalks, walkways and pavements that have been heavily salted. Birds can confuse road salt for food, and consumption of only 2 particles of salt could be fatal.

Reduce the amount of salt used on your own walks and driveways in order to help protect both pets and wildlife.

