Newton's Snow and Ice Removal Requirements

Businesses are required by law to clear their sidewalks within 12 hours of the end of a storm. Fines may be assessed for non-compliance.

The City also requires residents to clear their sidewalks, to allow neighbors to safely move around town.

NEWTON'S SNOW/ICE REMOVAL ORDINANCE

"Every owner or occupant of a building or lot of land abutting a sidewalk within a business, mixed use or manufacturing district…or in any other district which is used for a commercial or institutional purpose or contains more than four residential dwelling units…shall cause any snow to be removed from the sidewalk and such ice on the sidewalk to be removed, sanded or salted within 12 hours after such snow has ceased to fall…"

See City Ordinance sections 26-8 and 17-3 for more information about these requirements and the fines.

This brochure was adapted from:

Mystic River Watershed Association

City of Newton
1000 Commonwealth Ave
Newton, MA 02459
(617) 796-1000
Monday – Friday 8:30 am – 5 pm

For more information on preventing stormwater pollution, please visit the City's website: https://www.newtonma.gov/government/public-works/water-sewer-division/stormwater-resources

City of Newton

Public Works Dept.

WINTER SNOW AND ICE CONTROL

The Proper Use of De-icers

(especially for Commercial, Institutional & Industrial Property Owners)

OVERVIEW

Snow and ice on roads, parking lots, driveways, and sidewalks can create hazardous conditions. Snow and ice removal is best done mechanically with plows and shovels but, admittedly, the results are not always adequate to ensure safety. Chemical ice melting with “de-icers” and/or sanding is often a necessary part of a comprehensive strategy to make winter passage safe.

HOW SAND WORKS

Sand is an abrasive that does not have any ice melting capacity. It can provide traction for walking or driving. It is typically mixed with a de-icer to prevent its clumping. Sand is non-corrosive and inexpensive.

HOW DE-ICERS WORK

Chemical ice melters are salts that lower the freezing point of snow and ice and so turn snow and ice into a liquid or slush.

Solid chemical salts bore through ice or snow and form a strong brine solution which spreads under the ice or hard-packed snow, breaking its bond with the road or path surface. Loose ice and snow are easily removed.

PROPERTIES OF DE-ICERS

Sodium Chloride: Also known as rock salt, it provides adequate, cost-effective performance at temperatures at or just below 32°F; it loses most of its effectiveness when temperatures fall below 22°F. Rock salt can corrode steel, harm roadside vegetation, and contaminate surface and drinking water.

Calcium and Magnesium Chloride: Though these products cost 2-3 times more than rock salt, they are effective at lower temperatures, less corrosive to metals, and less harmful to roadside vegetation. They leave a white residue on surfaces when dry.

Calcium Magnesium Acetate: Though it costs about 5 times more than rock salt, it is effective at lower temperatures, it is not corrosive to metals, and is one of the most environmentally friendly ice melting compounds.

Sodium or Potassium Acetate: Though these products cost about 8 times more than rock salt, they are effective at lower temperatures, are not corrosive to metals since they contain no chlorides, and are safer for the environment.

Potassium Chloride: Though it costs about 10 times more than rock salt, potassium chloride is effective at lower temperatures, less corrosive to metals, and more environmentally friendly than other salts because of its lower chloride content.

IMPACTS OF SALT & SAND

Rock salt and sand have traditionally been perceived as the cheapest and most effective materials for de-icing driving and walking surfaces. However, many people do not realize that salt and sand have hidden costs and impacts. Even in relatively small quantities:

Salt can:

- Deteriorate paved surfaces, buildings, infrastructures, and the environment.
- Kill grass and other plants;
- Contaminate soil and groundwater for years;
- Kill aquatic animals and plants;

Sand can:

- Cause speed the deterioration of floors when it is tracked inside;
- Lose its effectiveness after becoming embedded in snow and ice;
- Clog catch basins and storm drains which can cause flooding; and
- Clog streams and wetlands
- Create nuisance levels of dust when it dries.
- Require expensive sweeping and clean-up at the end of the season.

CONCLUSIONS

- Limit your use of all salts and sands to the minimum required for safety.
- Use the least damaging products possible.
- Consider the total costs (including clean-up and environmental damage) of any product you use.
- Never dump snow in wetlands, catch basins or directly on top of storm drains or ditches.