
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

RICE CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT *Dialogue*

Minnesotans often have a love/hate relationship with winter due to the cool temperatures as well as the snow and ice commonly found on our roads, parking lots, and sidewalks. The most common reaction for dealing with these issues – besides staying indoors – is to apply salt, which contains chloride and can be harmful to aquatic life such as fish.

When snow and ice melt, the salt goes with it, washing into lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater. It takes only one teaspoon of road salt to pollute five gallons of water. Once in the water, there is no way to remove the chloride. High concentrations of chloride can harm fish and plant life. In addition to harming the ecosystem, chloride can also have a negative impact on your grass, gardens and trees. Therefore less is more when it comes to applying salt.

Follow These Simple Steps to Protect Our Waterways!

- **Shovel.** The more snow and ice you remove, the less salt you will have to use, and the more effective it will be in terms of keeping your driveways and sidewalks safe.
- **15°F and below, the salt must go.** Most salts stop working at this temperature. Use sand instead for traction, but remember that sand does not melt ice.
- **Slow down.** Drive for the conditions and make sure to give plow drivers plenty of space to do their work.
- **Be patient.** These products take time to work and are not always visible to the naked eye.
- **More is NOT better.** Use less than 4 pounds of salt per 1,000 square feet (an average parking space is about 150 square feet). One pound of salt is approximately a heaping 12-ounce coffee mug. Consider purchasing a hand-held spreader to help you apply a consistent amount.
- **Sweep up.** Salt or sand that is visible on dry pavement is no longer doing any work and will be washed away. Use this salt or sand somewhere else or throw it away. (Source: MPCA)

Why Be Cold this Winter? The NEC Makes Energy Improvements Easy

The Energy Conservation Deferred Loan provides up to \$6,500 in forgivable financing for the energy improvements you need today, including new furnaces, boilers, and insulation. Eligible upgrades will be identified in a home energy audit. **Make ZERO payments, pay ZERO interest, and OWE NOTHING** when you own your home for ten additional years.

Do I Qualify?

- Your home was built before 1995.
- The market value of your home is less than \$251,750.
- Your household assets are under \$50,000, excluding the value of your home, autos, and retirement fund.
- Maximum household income:

1 person	\$48,560	5 people	\$74,880
2 people	\$55,440	6 people	\$80,400
3 people	\$62,400	7 people	\$85,920
4 people	\$69,280	8 people	\$91,520

Don't spend another winter in a chilly, drafty house with high energy bills. The **Neighborhood Energy Connection** is a trusted 30-year old nonprofit right here in Ramsey County. Call them at 651-789-5706 or visit online at thenec.org/home-loans/forgiveable-home-improvement

