

CLEAN WATER IS UP TO YOU

Become a salt penny-pincher

From Brodhead Watershed Association



Wasted salt poses threats to children, pets, plants, and wildlife, corrodes paved surfaces — and pollutes well water, creeks and streams. Does a little extra salt really make a difference? You bet! Just think of a mere one unnecessary cup of salt multiplied thousands of times, just in your own community, year after year after year.

The salt you use on your steps and driveway doesn't "disappear" when the snow melts. That salty snow meltwater runs off or sinks into the ground — burning or killing plants and eventually making its way into the nearest well, creek, or pond.

"Sodium chloride — salt — has been identified as a significant threat to naturally fresh streams and lakes in the U.S. Northeast according to recent research," said Alex Jackson, executive director of Brodhead Watershed Association. "Salt gets into our clean streams from septic systems and from road and driveway applications. Preliminary results indicate that salt may remain in soil and groundwater, and so 'winter salt' seeps into our fragile creeks all summer long."

Salt also corrodes concrete and asphalt paving and poses a threat to children, pets, wildlife and drinking water.

Here are some steps to becoming a salt penny-pincher — while helping keep drinking water safe.

1. Less is more. Sprinkle salt sparingly— one coffee mug-full is plenty to treat a 20-foot driveway. More than that is money down the drain.
2. Shovel early and often. This allows the sun to help clear your walkways and helps very little salt go a long way. And it's easier on your back!
3. For the most impact, once the storm is over, sweep up excess salt. You can reuse it next time.
4. Consider purchasing a melt mat. For well-defined spaces like a front-door entrance, these electric pads can be a back-saver, without using any salt at all.

For information, visit the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (www.pnas.org/content/114/17/4453) and Penn State Extension (extension.psu.edu/melting-snow-its-stormwater-too)

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