

Quiz: Salt Safety



How much salt is enough?

- A handful per square metre should do it.
- You should spread enough so you can feel it crunching underfoot.
- The more, the better. It's important to use a lot to prevent injury.

How do you store sidewalk salt?

- Outside, in a sealed, waterproof bin.
- Outside, in the bag it comes in.
- Inside my garage.

What do you do when you spill some salt?

- Nothing; salt is harmless anyway.
- I clean it up when I have time.
- I clean it up right away.

FOR ANSWERS, SEE PRESCRIPTION: A LOW-SALT DIET FOR YOUR HOME, INSIDE.



SIERRA LEGAL DEFENCE FUND

ONTARIO PROGRAM OFFICE
Suite 900, 30 St. Patrick Street
Toronto, Ontario M5T 3A3
416.368.7533
sldfon@sierralegal.org
www.sierralegal.org



RiverSides
Where Water Quality Begins

RIVERSIDES STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE
511 Richmond Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5V 1Y3
416.868.1983
info@riversides.org
www.riversides.org

SIERRA LEGAL DEFENCE FUND AND RIVERSIDES STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE ARE COMMITTED TO THE USE OF ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE PAPERS. THIS BROCHURE USES **100%** POST-CONSUMER RECYCLED FIBRE.



Does Your Home Need A Low-Salt Diet?



Do you know how to use sidewalk salt safely outside your home in winter? Take the quiz to find out.

Prescription A Low-Salt Diet for Your Home

Patient: Your Home
Address: 1234 Any Street, Ontario



To treat snow and ice on your driveway, steps, and other walking surfaces, follow these guidelines:

- **Shovel and sweep:** Prevent slippery surfaces by clearing as much as you can before snow becomes compacted or melts and refreezes.
- **Use alternatives:** Although no substitute is free from environmental consequences, some are less toxic than others. Use sand, gravel or even unscented, unclumping kitty litter in moderation to increase traction. If you must use an ice-melter, read the instructions on the container carefully.
- **If you use sidewalk salt, apply one handful per square metre, at most.** If you can hear it crunch beneath your feet, you've used too much.
- **Only apply ice-melters or sidewalk salt where you need it.** For example, if you walk on one part of your porch in winter, don't spread ice-melters or sidewalk salt on the entire surface.
- **Only apply ice-melters or sidewalk salt on trees, gardens or lawns.** Even small amounts can harm vegetation and soil. And when you clear contaminated snow, pile it away from trees and plants where possible.
- **Avoid spreading ice-melters and sidewalk salt as hazardous material:** Keep these materials in a tightly sealed waterproof container to prevent seepage, in a garage if you have one. And clean up spills immediately.
- **Treat ice-melters and sidewalk salt as hazardous material:** Keep these materials in a tightly sealed waterproof container to prevent seepage, in a garage if you have one. And clean up spills immediately.
- **Avoid using sidewalk salt when the thermometer dips below -10°C:** Sodium chloride stops working at colder temperatures.

Repeat: Every winter

Physician's Signature

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

POST IN YOUR BASEMENT, GARAGE, OR WHEREVER YOU WANT A REMINDER ABOUT GOOD ICE-MELTER AND SIDEWALK SALT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES. AND THANKS FOR CHOOSING THE "LOW-SALT DIET" FOR YOUR HOME!



Road and Sidewalk Salt: An Environmentally Toxic Substance

In the winter and during spring runoff, many streams and rivers in Ontario have salt concentrations that are at least 20 times greater than they should be.

You can't tell by looking at them, but these rivers are overwhelmed by salt that is toxic to fish and threatens our drinking water.

We're not used to thinking about it this way, but salt is highly toxic to the environment:

- Heavy metals such as arsenic at the bottom of lakes are re-circulated when salt is present in water.
- Even small amounts of salt can cause trees to brown and die, prevent plants from absorbing water and nutrients, and degrade the quality of soil.
- Large numbers of birds eat granular salt and die from toxicosis (dehydration).

- Roadside salt pools attract mammals such as moose, deer and elk; they are a major cause of animal-related car accidents.
- Salt corrosion takes a significant economic toll through damage to roads, bridges, sidewalks and buildings.
- Consumers pay for salt damage and depreciation to their automobiles.

Salt enters our environment by being applied to walking and driving surfaces in winter. But Canadians are addicted to road and sidewalk salt; most of the time, we use far more than we need.

