



Article Side

Winter road maintenance by [Amber Cruz](#)

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Did you know that in US alone, more than 22 million tons of road salt are used every year to make roads safer?

The most common de-icing chemical is salt (sodium chloride) which usually comes from mined rock salt that has been crushed, screened, and treated with an anti-caking agent. Another chemical used widely but not as much as salt is calcium chloride, which works better in colder temperatures.

The idea behind this is simple. When salt dissolves it lowers the freezing temperature of water. Since the 1950s, it has been dumped on top of packed layers of snow and ice in sufficient quantities to melt through to the pavement, where it thaws the bond between the ice and the road surface, making it easier for the plows to scrape the road clear.

The surface temperature of a snow- or ice-covered road determines de-icing chemical amounts and melting rates. As temperatures go down, the amount of de-icer needed to melt a given quantity of ice increases significantly. Salt can melt five times as much ice at 30 degrees F as at 20 degrees F. The effectiveness of de-icing is sensitive to small differences in pavement temperatures.

The main problem with salting or other chemical de-icing is, the more than 22 million tons of road salt used nationwide each year don't just disappear after the snow melts. And evidence is growing that the salt concentration of streams, lakes and groundwater is steadily increasing. Salt levels in some places are high enough to harm roadside plants and aquatic life. Moreover, salt can damage the cars, their brake system and lead to faster corrosion.

There's also a clear notion in people's attitudes towards road safety that needs enhancement. People expect the roads to be dry few hours after a snowstorm, which might not be realistic. Rather than expecting the city or county to take care of the problem with salt, drivers should learn about safer driving techniques, have their tyres checked and invest in proper winter tyres. More information can be found from traffic safety sites such as Hakkapedia, which is a Nokian tyres way of promoting traffic safety for everyone. They even have a Hakkapeliitta Testdriver campaign, which gives the everyman a chance to tell safety tips to fellow drivers.

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