



# **Salt Eats Sidewalks!**

Your new sidewalks are a great asset to your property and neighborhood. However, snow melting chemicals can seriously damage them this first winter.

The new sidewalks look like they are hard as rocks and tough as steel, but during the first year after installation, concrete continues to slowly cure. While curing, the surface can absorb water and salts from deicers, leaving the surface pitted and permanently damaged by spring.

## **You can help us protect the taxpayers' investment with our easy tips:**

### **1. Shovel it away**

Physically remove the snow and ice. Plow, shovel, sweep or blow snow off sidewalks as soon as it falls while it can be easily removed and before it is packed by foot traffic.

### **2. Improve Traction**

If snow or ice become difficult to remove and slippery, sand, lawn fertilizer or even bird seed can be scattered to provide traction. They may need to be swept up later. These products do not damage concrete.

### **3. Soften and shovel it**

For stubborn ice and packed snow, you may have to soften it before shoveling it. **100% magnesium chloride (MgCl) is the least damaging of all the snow melt chemicals**, but even it shouldn't be left on the concrete any longer than it takes to shovel off the softened ice. It is extremely effective at very low temperatures and can be used sparingly compared to other chemicals. Magnesium chloride is slightly more expensive than other chemicals, but it pales in cost to replacing damaged sidewalks. Local suppliers of 100% magnesium chloride products include:

- Do It Best Hardware: **Safe Step**
- Ace Hardware: **Safe Step**
- Menards: **Freeze Guard**
- New Haven Turf Center: **Mag**
- Trelan Landscape Supply (wholesale only): **Mag**

*Lowes and Home Depot indicated they did not carry any 100% magnesium chloride products.*

### **Don't Salt it!**

Unlike popcorn, sidewalks and salt do not get along well. Salt has a couple of aliases: **Avoid products containing any calcium chloride (CaCl) or sodium chloride (NaCl) AKA rock salt and softener salt.** Both of these are damaging salts no matter what the label says.

Salt also kills lawns and trees. It is best not to pile **any** chemically treated snow or ice in landscape areas or tree grates.