

Merry and Bright; Keep Salt Light

By Jacquelyn Buck

Hot chocolate, Christmas Carols, snow, and ice have once again found themselves commonplace. 'Tis the season after all. While enjoying the beauty of our snow-covered city and warmth of family and friends, Allen County Partnership for Water Quality (ACPWQ) would like to challenge residents to make sure that they are keeping local waterways in mind too! This might seem like an odd request as waterways throughout the county are out of season and out of mind. But did you know that homeowners' actions during this time can make a huge impact on our rivers? When we treat sidewalks, driveways, roads, and parking lots, we add a chemical to the ground that does not naturally occur in this area.

Did you know that [one teaspoon of salt from impervious surfaces can permanently contaminate 5 gallons of water](#)? Salt can harm local water quality and affect local wildlife and plants. To do your part in keeping these spaces safe, ACPWQ has four suggestions for how to treat sidewalks, driveways, and parking lots.



- 1. [Remove any snow from the area BEFORE adding salt.](#)**
By removing any extra snow, homeowners will not have to apply as much salt to the area. This will help save money and ensure less salt ends up in our waterways.
- 2. [Be mindful of when putting salt down.](#)**
Did you know that salt has a temperature threshold for when it works? Yes, it can get too cold for salt to melt ice! So if it is colder than 15°F, do not put salt down! Instead, consider waiting to treat the area or look into alternatives such as [calcium chloride and magnesium chloride](#).
- 3. [More salt ≠ more melting.](#)**
There is a common misunderstanding that when you put more salt on an area the ice will melt faster. This is simply not true. By adding more salt than necessary, one is only ensuring that more salt is going to wash away and go to our rivers. Remember to read the directions to ensure that you are applying the correct amount of salt.
- 4. [REMOVE any extra salt.](#)**
Once the area treated has had the ice melt, sweep up any extra salt. The salt that remains on the ground does not serve a purpose and will wash away to the rivers if left on the ground.

So this holiday season, give your neighbors and those downstream the gift of improved water quality. May your holiday season be merry and bright and remember to keep salt light!