

Deicer

options

Deicers serve as important components to getting rid of unwanted ice and slippery areas. By understanding how they work and what the proper application is, you'll be able to serve your customers better.

There are four common halide salts used as deicers: magnesium chloride, calcium chloride, sodium chloride (rock salt) and potassium chloride. They each have a different melting rate, related to the chemical activity of the individual salts.

►Magnesium chloride provides a very fast melting action and high penetration rate, however, the melting action does not last very long. Magnesium chloride will drain moisture from air until it dilutes itself so much that the water could freeze again.

►Calcium chloride also has a fast melting action. It too, however, draws moisture from the air in a manner similar to magnesium chloride, but at a lesser rate.

►Sodium chloride provides a long-lasting melting action as a result of the product's chemistry and mixture of fine and coarse crystals.

►Potassium chloride's melting action is quite slow and therefore may have limited applications for deicing.

►Salt is the most common melter used. While other melters have different performance characteristics, salt melts the most ice and snow per dollar. A cost comparison of the four deicing products reveals that potassium, calcium and magnesium chlorides are four, seven and 14 times costlier than sodium chloride.

Time/right amount

The keys to the effective use of any deicer, including salt, are to apply the proper amount of material based on the weather conditions and allow sufficient time for the melter to work. This is particularly important at lower temperatures.

If landscapers plan ahead, healthy vegetation can be maintained throughout the deicing season by strategic planting of vegetation bordering roadways or walkways that are salt tolerant and efficient application of deicing materials. Most major salt manufacturers offer a variety of blended deicing salt products that help protect delicate vegetation. These products generally are available in bulk and a variety of packaged sizes and are specifically designed to address the salt/vegetation issue. •

SIMA for snow pros

In 1996, in order to place a more professional image on the snow and ice removal industry, the Snow & Ice Management Association Inc. (SIMA) was formed. SIMA currently has about 100 members and is growing by 3 to 4 members every week.

SIMA president **John Allin** says the mission is to "provide a network of resources of information to our members in the snow and ice industry and to promote ethical, efficient and environmentally sound risk management."

"We're all concerned about slip and fall lawsuits. We don't want our customers to be hurt. The property manager wants to make sure that their customers, whether they are tenants in a residential facility or whether they're shoppers at a large grocery store, those people want to make sure that those people can get in and out of their places of business and they want to make sure that they can do it safely," comments Allin. •



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