

# ICE MELT FAQs

## 1. Which type of ice melt is best to use?

It really depends on the outside temperature and how fast you need to see results. The table below shows which ice melts work effectively at which temperatures and how long it takes them to typically work. Other factors you may want to consider are size of the crystals, ease of application and color indicators.

Type	Chemical Formula	Works to Temperature	Melt Speed
Sodium Chloride (Rock)	NaCl	5°F to 10°F	Medium
Magnesium Chloride Blends	Contains MgCl <sub>2</sub>	5°F to -15°F	Medium High
Calcium Chloride	CaCl <sub>2</sub>	-25°F	High

## 2. How do ice melters work?

**Above 10°F:** At this temperature, Sodium Chloride (Rock) can still find some water to build a brine. This process relies on the sun or warmed surfaces to help with melting. Once temperatures fall below 5°F, this no longer works.

**Below 5°F:** Formulas that work below this temperature extract their own water through one or both processes below. These blended formulas generally contain some combination of Magnesium Chloride and/or Calcium Chloride. Straight Calcium Chloride melts to the lowest temperature.

- **Hygroscopic:** Extracts water from ice to start creating brine. (MgCl and CaCl)
- **Exothermic:** Gives off heat as it reacts with water to speed brine creation. (CaCl)

## 3. What can I use that doesn't harm concrete or vegetation?

The freeze/thaw cycling that happens in winter can cause damage to concrete. However, most ice melters can be used on properly placed, cured, air-entrained concrete that has been sealed.

Too much of any type of salt can cause damage to vegetation. Proper salt application is important to avoid this. Some ice melter blends are color tinted for easier visual application. Since blends also work faster than rock salt, you may not need as much salt application to remove the ice and snow. Always follow package instructions on any ice melt product!

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### **4. How much ice melt should I use?**

Always follow package instructions for correct application amount. Here is just one rough example for reference:

A 50# bag of Winter Melt (halite) hold 79 cups of product. For a 1 acre parking lot, if you apply the salt at a rate of 1 cup per square yard, you will need 4840 cups for the acre (4840 square yards in an acre). This equates to just over 61 bags of product to complete the job. For 2 acres, double the amount, and so on.

### **5. Will the ice melt salt track on floors?**

Sodium Chloride (Rock) salt may leave a powdery residue, but is easily removed with sweeping or vacuuming. Magnesium Chloride and Calcium Chloride may leave an oily residue, which is not as visible as the powdery residue, but can be more slippery. It should be sponged or mopped up once dry.

Many of the current ice melter blends on the market claim no oily residue or tracking. With proper application and ice removal, ice melter should leave little film or residue behind at all.

### **6. Tips for a safer environment:**

- Timing is an important factor in salt application, taking into consideration how fast salt can be applied, traffic density, spreading pattern and even wind
- Using the proper amount of salt, no more and no less than necessary, is safest for the environment
- Store bulk salt properly on a non-penetrable concrete surface with proper drainage and covering to keep dry.



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