

Preparing Brick Walkways for Winter Weather
Best Practices for Pre-Treating Before Snow and Ice

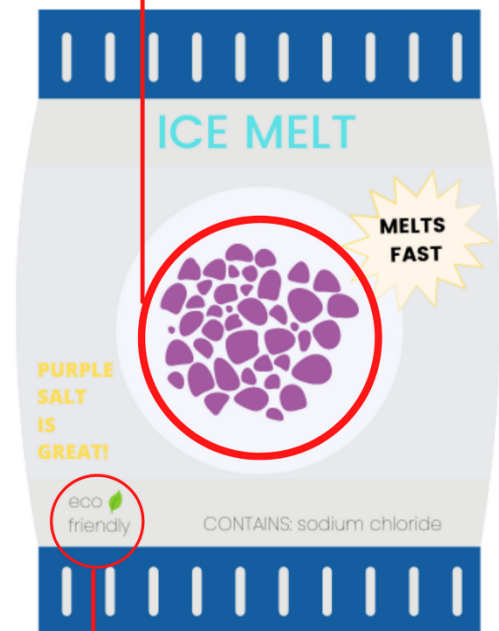
When the City of Fredericksburg prepares for winter weather, the City's Public Works Department asks that the public read the following information prior to pre-treating brick walkways:

The best way to make walkways safe is to pre-treat them, preferably with a plant and lawn-safe ice-melt product. Residents and business owners are required to clear snow/ice from public sidewalks adjacent to their property. Anyone with brick sidewalks adjacent to their property should avoid using salt (Sodium Chloride) on snow/ice and unnatural colored ice melt (i.e. purple). Those materials will damage brick sidewalks and also cause staining of the red bricks.

Salt can be incredibly dangerous to plant life. Plants normally need only a tiny amount of sodium for optimal health. But when large quantities of salt seep into the ground, it stops plants from taking up other nutrients, such as potassium and calcium, leading to unhealthy plants. In addition, salt pulls moisture out of plants, including any moisture in the leaves, branches, roots, or main stems of your shrubs and trees. In this condition, plants may not be able to draw in water, even if the ground is well watered. This is often the cause of the brown, dry leaf tips and dying leaves you may see on trees and shrubs in winter or on new leaves in spring. For these reasons, the City asks that you use sand or Magnesium Chloride as an alternative.



Brightly colored rock salts are artificially colored, containing toxic properties that pose risk for plants and mammals.



Just because a product is advertised as eco-friendly, it doesn't mean that it always is. Be sure to read the contents.

The City recommends that residents and businesses try to do the following amidst winter weather:

- If you're expecting snow or ice, spread a light application of ice melt product before the weather arrives. This will minimize snow or ice build-up and make it easier to remove afterward.
- If you must use ice melt products, apply sparingly and use a pet-friendly version (most people apply more than needed and too much can actually harm the concrete).
- Read product materials before purchasing, even in cases where the product may display as an "eco- or environmentally friendly" product. For example:

If you would like more information about this topic, please call Diane Beyer at (540) 372-1032, or email dbeyer@fredericksburgva.gov.