

Edina Public Schools/April 2017  
Source: Tim Myre, Building & Grounds

Over the last three years the new management team at Edina Public Schools (EPS) Building & Grounds has dramatically reduced winter salt usage on their sidewalks while maintaining a safe environment for the thousands of students, staff and guests who walk in and out of their properties each winter.

Supervisor Tim Myre says when he first arrived three years ago the district was using multiple 50lb bags of salt per storm event just on their sidewalks. The high school alone was using 500 - 1,000+ pounds per event. Now district-wide per event salt usage is measured in the 10's to 100's of pounds and the high school uses zero to 150 pounds per event.

The change all started when Building and Grounds staff began attending the MPCA Winter Parking Lot and Sidewalk Maintenance Training. Myre credits the training for expanding his crew's awareness of how to effectively manage salt applications before, during and after storm events through equipment calibration and proper timing. They learned that salting during a storm is actually counterproductive because it creates slush, which can refreeze, creating more ice. Now pretreatment along with sweeping are used before and during storms. Salting, if necessary, is reserved for after the event. The School District has purchased some new snow removal machinery that has greatly improved how much snow is left after sweeping, reducing the amount of salt needed.

“At first many employees had varying ideas about how to solve snow and ice problems on the grounds, but once they attended the training, everyone got on the same page. Now it's clear we can be safe and use a lot less (salt)”, says Myre.

The experience has been so positive that new department employees now routinely attend salt training. In 2017 management committed to begin sending employees to the new MPCA Turf Grass Maintenance with Reduced Environmental Impacts Training and are looking forward to complimentary their success in the winter season with new best practices during the growing seasons.

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Notes: Pallet of salt is 2500# or 50 bags  
They cost \$350-\$400