

Winter De-Icing Hacks: Protect Your Property and Your Tenants

Snow and ice are inevitable in Chicago winters, but choosing the wrong de-icer can cost you thousands in repairs and even harm your tenants' pets. Here's a guide to help you stay ahead of the storm while keeping your property safe and your tenants happy.

Cost-Saving Tips

- 1. **Pre-Treat Before Storms:** Minimize ice accumulation.
- 2. **Store Properly:** Use sealed containers to preserve effectiveness.
- 3. **Use Correct Amounts:** Avoid overapplication.
- 4. **Combine with Sand:** Improve traction on icy surfaces.

Key Recommendations by Area

- **Entrances & Walkways:** Use pet-safe or premium blends.
- **Parking Lots:** Standard rock salt acceptable.
- **Pet Relief Areas:** Only use pet-safe products.
- **New Concrete:** Use CMA or premium blends.

De-Icing Product Comparison Table

De-Icer Type	Temperature Effectiveness	Cost (per 50lb bag)	Pet-Friendliness	Corrosivity (Metal and Concrete)	Environmental Friendliness	Pros	Cons	Best For
Rock Salt (Sodium Chloride)	Down to 15°F	\$5-10	Poor	High	Poor	Affordable, widely available, effective for large areas.	Highly corrosive and damages concrete and metal.	Large areas like parking lots in mild cold.
Calcium Chloride	Down to -25°F	\$20-30	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Fast-acting and effective at very low temperatures.	Can leave slippery residue if over-applied.	Entrances or shaded areas in extreme cold.
Magnesium Chloride	Down to -15°F	\$15-25	Good	Low	Good	Minimizes concrete damage, works in moderate cold.	Higher cost compared to basic options.	Entryways and high-traffic areas in moderate cold.
Calcium/Magnesium Mix	Down to -25°F	\$25-35	Good	Low	Good	Reduces surface damage and requires less product.	Expensive upfront and requires careful application.	High-traffic paths and walkways during extreme cold.
CMA (Calcium Magnesium Acetate)	Down to 20°F	\$40-50	Excellent	None	Excellent	Non-corrosive and ideal for premium areas.	Less effective in extreme cold, costly option.	New concrete or premium entrances in light cold.
Urea-Based Products	Down to 25°F	\$30-40	Good	None	Moderate	Effective for entrances and walkways.	Can oversaturate soil with nitrogen.	Near pet relief areas or entrances.
Propylene Glycol Blends	Down to 15°F	\$45-55	Excellent	None	Excellent	Works well for main entrances in cold temperatures.	Premium cost, limited effectiveness in extreme cold.	Main entrances for pet-friendly properties.
Sand	Provides traction only	\$5-15	Neutral	None	Good	Provides immediate traction on ice and snow.	Messy and requires cleanup after use.	For immediate traction needs with other de-icers.
Beet Juice/Molasses	Lowers freezing point when mixed with salt	Varies by source	Good	Low	Good	Enhances salt performance and reduces ice buildup.	Preparation needed, may leave residue.	To reduce salt use and for eco-friendly DIY solutions.