# Salt Smart Practices for Safe Roads

Communities and Roads Agencies are adjusting their operations to use more best management practices, also known as Salt Smart Practices, to keep our roads safe during winter storms and reduce wasted salt. In this blog, we’ll explore several innovative snow clearing techniques that allow for more efficient road maintenance.

## Preparing for Storms

Before winter begins, communities and road agencies take proactive steps to prepare for winter. They develop or update their Snow and Ice Plans, outlining protocols to keep the roads clear. They train key staff each year so they are up-to-date on Salt Smart Practices. Staff calibrate salt spreading equipment to verify application settings. Routine calibration ensures accurate salt use during a storm.

Many communities and road agencies receive advanced winter weather forecasts to better predict the conditions during a winter weather event. This helps them prepare for the storm and be ready to act when the storm hits.

## Anti-Icing: Getting a Head Start

When winter weather is predicted, communities and road agencies are turning to Anti-Icing before the storm arrives. Anti-icing involves spraying a liquid deicer on roads before a storm. This prevents snow from bonding to the pavement and results in less hard pack formation. As a result, plowing becomes more efficient, and roads can be cleared faster during and after the storm.

## Improved Snow Clearing with Segmented Blades

One of the best ways to clear roads is to plow snow off the road surface. New plow technology, like Segmented Blades, removes snow faster and easier. A segmented plow blade is split into segments that better conform to the road surface, resulting in a cleaner scrape with each pass. As a result, communities and roads agencies are able to use less salt to achieve safe surfaces.

## The Right Deicers for the Right Conditions

After plowing, communities use deicers, like salt, to help break up any hard pack and clear remaining snow for safe road surfaces. By measuring pavement temperatures, communities and road agencies can follow the three “R”s: the *right* material for the *right* conditions applied at the *right* time. This means they are able to be Salt Smart and only use what they need to get the job done.

## Using Liquids for Better Results

Communities are also embracing liquid deicers during and after the storm. Because liquid deicers are already dissolved into a liquid solution, they begin working immediately. Liquid deicers stay where they are applied unlike dry granular materials that often bounce and scatter off the surface as they are applied. Therefore, liquids allow for lower application rates and less waste.

Liquid deicers can be added to dry deicing materials to help them stick to the pavement and jump start the process. This is called “Pre-Wetting” or “Pre-Treating” and is another way to provide safe surfaces with less materials.

## Why are you seeing these changes?

Road salt damages both our built and natural environments. Thanks to Salt Smart Practices, we can waste less salt while creating safe surfaces and protecting the environment. As more communities and contractors adopt these best management practices, aka Salt Smart Practices, you’re going to see less dry salt on our roads, parking lots, and sidewalks and instead see more liquid deicers being applied. Safety always comes first, and by using Salt Smart Practices, our winter professionals are able to provide safe surfaces while protecting our built and natural environments.