



## Making Sense of Winter Salt Use

### What is SaMS?

The Virginia Salt Management Strategy (SaMS) was established by a diverse group of stakeholders coordinated by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). SaMS provides recommendations for improving winter practices through efficient and effective salt use while maintaining the same levels of safety. The strategy also offers ways to raise awareness of these impacts, how individuals and organizations can participate, guidance for water quality monitoring and research to support action.

### Why Should I Care?

In winter, salt helps to keep us safe. Salt applied to paved surfaces provide important benefits:

- ▶ **For People and Businesses:** Fewer incidents of slip and fall injuries
- ▶ **For Transportation:** Reduces frequency of vehicle crashes by 88%-95%
- ▶ **For the Economy:** Enables businesses, government and social services to continue with minimal interruption (estimated avoiding roughly \$300-\$700 million in direct/indirect costs for a major, one-day, statewide storm).

However, after a snow event, salt residue lingers and impacts:

- ▶ **Public health:** Salt levels in the Potomac River and Occoquan Reservoir – both of which are local drinking water sources – have risen noticeably over the past several decades, with average concentrations more than doubling.
- ▶ **Infrastructure:** Corrosion and damage to vehicles, roads, bridges, sidewalks and parking lots leads to higher maintenance and replacement costs.
- ▶ **The environment:** Increases in stream and groundwater salinity impact freshwater fish and other aquatic life.

The focus of SaMS is to balance the unintended impacts of salt use with the important safety benefits in Northern Virginia.

### How Can I Learn More?

Visit [www.deq.virginia.gov/SaMS](http://www.deq.virginia.gov/SaMS).

Your feedback is valuable. Please share your thoughts on this outreach effort by completing this form: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LMK6MD6>