

INSIDE GRUNDY COUNTY
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How do you remove hard packed snow and ice from your sidewalk and driveway? The following tips on sidewalk deicers can be used to make that job easier. They come from Shawn Shouse, Iowa State University Extension Field Specialist/Ag Engineering. "When ice and packed snow make sidewalks and driveways slippery and dangerous, chemical deicers can be a big help. Deicers work by dissolving into the ice and lowering the freezing point so the ice turns to water or slush, even at temperatures well below 32 degrees".

"Deicers work best when used in combination with scraping and shoveling. Use the deicer to melt through the ice and soften it from the bottom. Then use a scraper or shovel to remove the ice from the sidewalk".

"For melting through layers of ice, the shape of the deicer granules makes a difference. Round pellets about the size of these circles (oO), 1/16 to 3/16 inches in diameter, melt through ice faster than irregular shapes, flakes or powder".

"Five types of chemical deicers are commonly used, often times in mixtures: (1) Sodium chloride (common rock salt) has been used for years. It is fairly inexpensive but not as effective as other chemicals. Sodium chloride is very corrosive to steel and concrete and can burn plants where the ice is pushed aside. (2) Calcium chloride is a different form of salt. As it dissolves in water a chemical reaction gives off heat. This property makes it effective at much lower temperatures than other deicers. (3) Potassium chloride salt is more likely to harm plants than other deicers. (4) Urea fertilizer (made from ammonia and carbon dioxide) is less likely to damage plants than potassium chloride but may cause excessive plant growth along the edges of sidewalks and driveways. (5) Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) is a salt free melting agent made from limestone and acetic acid. CMA has little impact on plants and is used on bridges and environmentally sensitive areas".

"You can minimize damage to concrete and plants by using deicers sparingly and removing ice as soon as it is loose. Always read and follow label directions when using any product, including deicers".

"What about sand? While sand does not melt ice, it does improve footing while ice is there. Mixtures of sand and deicers can be very effective in making your sidewalk safer".

For more information, please contact the Grundy Office of Iowa State University Extension at 319-824-6979 or the Families Extension Answer Line at 1-800-262-3804.