

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

Date: February 12, 2014

To: County Highway Commissioners

From: Todd Matheson, P.E.
State Maintenance Engineer

Subject: Wisconsin DOT Direction and Guidance on State Salt Conservation

A combination of extreme cold and numerous winter storm events have put us on pace to use more road salt this season than ever before. Options to purchase additional salt may not exist, or timely deliveries may not be viable. The following steps are being implemented now to help ensure the remaining state salt supply is utilized in the most efficient and effective manner. To reduce the risk of any one county running out of salt, we continue to rebalance state salt inventories geographically as needed.

For the remainder of this winter, or until additional direction is issued, the following guidelines should be implemented:

Interstate/Backbone/24 Hour Routes

- No change in level of service.
- Prewetting equipment on trucks will be utilized whenever possible.
- MDSS initial application rates at the beginning of storms will be consulted and not exceeded unless warranted.

18 Hour Routes

- Reduce maximum application to 200 lbs/lane mile (down from 300 lbs/lane mile) during snow events. Application rates of 300 lbs/lane mile are still allowed during freezing rain events. Allow for use of additional sand/salt mix on 18 Hour Routes when appropriate (with a focus on lower ADT routes). Sand/salt mixes should be applied at a rate whereas the rate of salt application does not exceed 200 lbs/lane mile.
- Continue to follow HMM [06-15-05](#) regarding level of effort to bring roadway conditions back to bare wheel paths as described in our current policy.
- Prewetting equipment on trucks will be utilized whenever possible.
- MDSS initial application rates at the beginning of storms will be consulted and not exceeded unless warranted. Treatment recommendations in MDSS have been modified to reflect the new maximum rate of 200 lbs/lane mile.

Please continue to use the following best practices to conserve salt resources:

1. Plow whenever possible. Mechanical removal of snow from roadways is by far the most efficient method.
2. Use more liquids to extend salt supplies.

- Prewet dry salt whenever possible. This will allow for more salt to remain on the roadways and will allow for a reduced application rate as compared to dry salt.
 - Anti-Ice when the conditions are favorable to reduce the amount of salt used during storms.
3. Follow MDSS treatment recommendations and only deviate to higher application rates when necessary. MDSS often recommends lower application rates when weather and environmental conditions warrant less salt. Pay close attention to MDSS pavement temperature forecasts, especially post-storm. With the sun being higher in the sky, pavement temperatures will often rise above freezing once the snow ends and the sun comes out.
 4. Salting of long line shoulders is prohibited as stated in Highway Maintenance Manual [06-15-10](#).
 5. Do not salt areas where drifting snow is forecast to occur. Pay particular attention to the wind forecast in MDSS so you are aware of which roads will be impacted by drifting.
 6. Ensure application equipment is properly calibrated.

Your continued diligent use of remaining state salt supplies will ensure the safety and mobility of the state highway system. I appreciate your cooperative efforts in managing our limited resources.