



# ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIFICATION GUIDANCE FOR SNOW & ICE PRODUCTS

The District of Columbia is committed to procuring quality goods and services in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost that support the District in meeting its sustainability goals. Compliance with specification guidance is sufficient to meet PPRA Section 1101(a) environmentally preferable procurement requirements. Additional contextual information is provided here to assist in the implementation of the specification. To access solicitation documents with full contract language, [click here](#).



## BENEFITS 86,000

Gallons of brine and beat juice mixture are sprayed in the District before snow and precipitation begins

## \$5 Billion dollars

is the estimated cost of annual repairs in the U.S. due to the corrosive effects of rock salt deicers and anti-icers

### SOURCES

<https://snow.dc.gov/page/equipment-and-deicer-supplies>

<https://www.epa.gov/snep/winter-coming-and-it-tons-salt-our-roads>

## Scope

The environmental specification addresses additional information for snow and ice control products that can be used as an alternative to sodium chloride (salt) for de-icing walkways, sidewalks, parking lots, bridges, streets, and roadways.

## COPY AND PASTE THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATION LANGUAGE INTO THE REQUIREMENTS SECTION OF YOUR STATEMENT OF WORK

### EPPS Requirements

Snow and ice control products such as deicers and anti-icers purchased by the District of Columbia shall meet the environmental criteria defined below.

Products and services shall be certified to at least one (1) of the following standards, using the most recent version in effect at the time of purchase:

- Safer Choice
- USDA's BioPreferred® Program
- Clear Roads



## Additional Information

Road salt corrodes vehicles, bridges, and other metal structures, and its accumulation and persistence pose a risk to water quality and the plants, animals, and humans who depend on the water. In bodies of water, such as lakes, rivers, and local ponds, salt run-off raises the salinity of the water while reducing dissolved oxygen levels, creating conditions that may negatively impact native wildlife. In the soil, salt primarily causes dehydration which leads to foliage damage, and also causes osmotic stress that harms root growth ([Mass.gov](http://Mass.gov)). Particularly high concentrations of sodium and chloride may be found in snow melt, which many animals drink to relieve thirst, potentially causing salt toxicity including dehydration, confusion and weakness, among other symptoms, [according to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Sciences](#).

Biobased de-icers and anti-icers can be generated as byproducts of agricultural operations like sugar beet refining or ethanol production and used to reduce the use of salts ([BioPreferred.gov](http://BioPreferred.gov)).



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [Safer Choice](#) program screens products for potential human and environmental hazards and only labels products with ingredients that pose the least concern among chemicals in their class. It verifies that consumer and institutional products meet its criteria for safer chemicals. The EPA recommends this federal ecolabel when purchasing deicer or any services that involve the use of deicer ([epa.gov](http://epa.gov)). Safer Choice-Certified products can be searched and located on the [EPA website's catalog](#).



Per the [Biopreferred.gov](http://Biopreferred.gov) website, [USDA's BioPreferred® Program](#) assists users in identifying products that qualify for mandatory federal purchasing, are certified through the voluntary labeling initiative, or both. The biobased contents of these products/packages have been third-party tested at independent laboratories.

These products/packages have earned USDA certification and the approval to display the USDA Certified Biobased Product label. [Biopreferred.gov](http://Biopreferred.gov) provides sourcing information, such as product details and company websites. Deicers and anti-icers are currently located in the catalog under Operations and Maintenance > Deicers



Clear Roads is a national research consortium focused on rigorous testing of winter maintenance materials, equipment, and methods for use by highway maintenance crews. The mission of the Clear Roads Qualified Products List (QPL) is to “strive to serve the traveling public by evaluating and establishing specifications for products used in winter maintenance that emphasize safety, environmental preservation, infrastructure protection, cost-effectiveness and performance” ([clearroads.org](http://clearroads.org)). Deicers from the Clear Roads [QPL](#) list are environmentally preferred products (with the exception of Category 8: Non-Corrosion-Inhibited Sodium Chloride).



**Environmental Hotspots** The most important environmental benefits associated with this specification

**RECYCLED CONTENT** Biobased deicers and anti-icers can be generated as byproducts of agricultural operations like [sugar beet refining](#) or [the wet milling of corn and alcohol production](#) and used to reduce the use of salts.

**TOXICITY/HEAVY METALS** An estimated [20 million tons of salt](#) is scattered on U.S. roads annually, which becomes toxic to aquatic life. Even low concentrations can produce harmful effects in freshwater ecosystems by depleting oxygen levels in bodies of water. Road salt also corrodes automobiles, roads, bridges, and other critical infrastructure.

**Significance to the District**

**PPRA** [PPRA §104](#) specifies that products meet Default Environmental Standards. [The U.S. EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines](#) recommend use of private sector standards/ecolabels when purchasing deicer or any services that involve the use of deicer. The EPA Comprehensive Guidelines are a Default Environmental Standard.

**SUSTAINABLE DC PLAN** [Sustainable DC](#) Plan Nature: Goal 3: "Improve human access to and stewardship of nature" aims to provide a healthy environment for building occupants. Many sustainable carpets improve indoor air quality and/or emit fewer VOCs, which helps the District to meet this goal.

For more information about sustainable specification guidance or the District's Sustainable Purchasing Program, please visit: <https://ocp.dc.gov/page/sustainable-purchasing-program> or call the OCP Procurement Center of Excellence at: [202.724.4477](tel:202.724.4477) or email [sppdc@dc.gov](mailto:sppdc@dc.gov).