



CITY OF SELAH

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From: Rocky Wallace, Public Works Director

Attention: Selah Residents and Business Owners

Re: Winter Sidewalk Care

This is a seasonal reminder regarding snow and ice removal from sidewalks during winter weather. The City is requesting your active participation in diligent snow removal practices.

Common snow and/or ice removal practices include shoveling and spreading salt or a commercial ice melt product. Unfortunately, when these products are sprinkled on concrete to melt snow and ice, the salt dissolves the snow and produces a salt water solution (a brine). Melting action of the brine then allows water to enter the concrete. If the temperature drops and the water freezes, growing ice crystals can damage the concrete. Salt naturally attracts water. Salt can cause concrete to become more saturated with water than it would otherwise. Water volume increases by nine percent when it freezes within the concrete. Pressure of the growing ice crystals can cause the concrete surface to fail. Consequent failure of the concrete will expedite the need for sidewalk repairs and/or replacement which in turn increases the City's expenditures.

All ice melt products work on the same principle, therefore, there are no safe chemicals to use to melt ice.

The recommended alternative to using salt or ice melt products is regular shoveling maintenance and the use of sand. Sand will not melt snow and ice, but it will provide the necessary traction for pedestrians. This may be new information to you or just a reminder as sidewalk maintenance is the responsibility of the abutting property owner not the City. The City's municipal code (specifically SMC 7.10.010, which is fully set forth below) requires property owners to keep sidewalks clear of snow and/or ice.

SMC 7.10.010

Selah Municipal Code (SMC) 7.10.010 – titled "Duty of Owner or Occupant" – provides as follows:

Every owner or occupant of any house or other building, and the owner or proprietor, lessee, or person entitled to the possession of any vacant property, and every person having charge of any church, charitable institution and public building within the limits of the city of Selah shall remove snow or ice from sidewalks adjacent and contiguous to the property with reasonable dispatch; or shall, in case the snow and ice are so congealed to the sidewalk that damage to the sidewalk would probably occur if removal were attempted, cause the snow and ice to be covered with ashes, sand, salt or other substitutes so as to allow use of sidewalks by pedestrians in a safe manner. (Ord. 323, 1965.)

The City's Public Works Department will support and help residents as time allows. With collective compliance, the City can avoid unnecessary sidewalk repair and replacement expenses, revenues can be devoted to other matters, and no resident will face any claim for reimbursement. Thank you in advance for working together to create a safer winter environment for our community. If you have any questions, please telephone (509) 698-7365.

