



4646 Dakota St. S.E.
Prior Lake, MN 55372

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Contact: Michael T. Peterson, Communication Coordinator
952-447-9804, mtpeterson@cityofpriorlake.com

Prior Lake Public Works Provides Safety and Savings with New Environmentally-friendly Anti-icing Practices

Often new techniques, equipment and products enable the City of Prior Lake Public Works Department to better alleviate or combat the difficulties that come with Minnesota winters while saving tax payer dollars, and such is the case regarding the de-icing of Prior Lake City Streets.

Over the last three years, Prior Lake residents may have noticed city trucks spraying liquid products on certain streets during the colder months. This practice is called anti-icing. City staff is mixing water and salt to make a 23% brine solution which is applied to City streets ahead of snow storms to prevent bonding of snow to the pavement. In addition to salt brine, City staff utilizes GEOMELT, a sugar beet-based environmentally-friendly product used to hold the brine to the road surface that is blended with magnesium chloride during colder temperatures.

Use of these products allows the city's public works staff to reduce application rates of salt and impacts to the lakes and wetlands, thereby providing safer commutes for residents and often reducing costs in staff time spent applying de-icing products.

City staff also continues to improve and lower costs associated with winter maintenance by implementing alternatives to past procedures, and taking action to minimize the impact to the environment. One such project is scheduled this winter in the Blind Lake watershed area. The city will apply liquid-only anti-icing and de-icing products while simultaneously investigating the movements and impacts of road salt in a confined watershed.

The department also obtained a grant from the Local Road Research Board for the use of molasses to hold the brine to the road surface in anti-icing practices. The grant allows for the purchase of the molasses and storage tanks. The anti-icing products will be utilized throughout the community at significant cost savings. City staff will provide results from both research projects as the information comes available.

Preliminary results show that the City of Prior Lake can use significantly less product, clear streets down to the bituminous and do so quicker than using conventional methods. So these new techniques save money, protect the environment and improve snow and ice control efforts.

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The Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance, repair and construction of the city's infrastructure, including streets and sidewalks, water and sewer utilities and parks. Each year, winter preparations begin early so that the department can put itself in the best possible position to successfully carry out its snow and ice control responsibilities for the residents and businesses of Prior Lake.

For more information, updates to the City's Winter Maintenance Policy, results from the research projects and information regarding parking restrictions (which started on Nov.1) visit the City's website at www.cityofpriorlake.com. Residents can also contact the Prior Lake Maintenance Center at (952) 447-9830 with any questions regarding winter maintenance activities.