

Q & A

Unit Step KNOWS

CAN SALT DAMAGE CONCRETE? YES

Q. I was told by a good friend not to use ice-melting salt on my concrete driveway. He said It could damage the concrete. IS THIS TRUE?

A . **YES**, salt may damage the concrete. The damage is not just caused by the chemical. Part Of the problem is due to the freeze/thaw process. This process can be very hard on your concrete must endure. The freeze/thaw cycle is a problem because concrete is porous concrete. By using ice melt, you are greatly increasing the number of freeze/thaw cycles and moisture seeps into the pores as well as into cracks. This moisture will freeze and expand, creating stress. Masonry and stone also suffer due to freeze/thaw cycles. In addition to this process, there are some ingredients used in ice melt that are not good for concrete, **especially new concrete (less than two years old)**. Avoid ammonium sulphate, magnesium chloride and calcium chloride. In addition to damaging concrete, sodium (salt) can also be tough on surrounding vegetation. The chemicals in deicing products can also be harsh and irritating to your pet's paws.

While those are all negative attributes, you might argue that the use of ice melting products Is to prevent injury from slipping and falling. That is an important consideration. You do have some other options. There are products that are a little more concrete friendly. You Can research these on-line. There are several brands. You may find they are more expensive Than common rock salt (sodium chloride). Or, you can stick with the more old-fashioned alternative of using sand. While it will not melt the ice, it will add traction for a less slippery Surface.

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