



# Facilitator Guide

*A guide to implementing Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota.*

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*Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota* is a toolbox intended for local government unit (LGU) staff to use in their communities to reduce chloride pollution on private property.

All materials for program facilitation are hosted online at [low-salt-no-salt-mn.org](http://low-salt-no-salt-mn.org).

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## Overview

### Program purpose

*Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota* is a program that builds community capacity to maintain winter safety while reducing chloride-based deicer use and its associated damages through relationships with local properties managed by resident boards.

### Goal

The goal is to reduce chloride pollution from private properties which are managed by boards and committees (condo, townhomes, faith-based facilities). This program couples awareness with technical support to help people identify custom solutions that suit their specific needs and empower them to act.

### Program origin

A team of water resource professionals led the development of and provided expertise for the *Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota* initiative. The team worked closely with a Minnesota marketing firm to establish a brand, interview target audiences, identify key messages, and develop the presentation and videos.

The primary goal of the effort was to provide a toolbox that local units of government (LGUs) may use during conversations with local residents, businesses, and property managers about best practices related to winter maintenance.

**Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota**  
*is an outreach program designed to provide local agencies and organizations with the consistent messaging and resources they need to confidently help property management decision-makers reduce the need for winter salt for a healthier environment and cleaner, safe communities.*



**Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota**  
*provides custom solutions to confidently and safely reduce the use of winter salt in order to protect Minnesota's water and lands from permanent damage due to chloride pollution.*

## Target Audience

Homeowner associations, condo associations, and faith-based facilities have boards/committees that make decisions about priorities, vendors, and budgets. Engaging this group is an opportunity to build community capacity at a hyper-local scale. Boards/committees have interest and influence and care deeply about their space. The members are generally there long-term providing opportunities for relationship building with local leaders and culture-setting in their association and in the greater community.

## Components of the Toolbox

COMPONENT	PURPOSE
<b>PowerPoint presentation</b>	Editable presentation with option to add/remove/reorder slides and add your organization's branding.
<b>Videos</b>	Share video links through email, post on social media, or embed on your website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full video (~5 minutes)</li> <li>• Social media video (40 seconds)</li> <li>• Liability and winter maintenance planning (2 ½ minutes)</li> </ul> Playlist: <a href="https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLdBYo_UIUg_MLgkJkzUNWkICGfriH0VZB">youtube.com/playlist?list=PLdBYo_UIUg_MLgkJkzUNWkICGfriH0VZB</a>
<b>Conversation starters</b>	Use these questions to begin or guide a conversation about reducing chloride use. Use to supplement other components.
<b>Pledge form</b>	By signing a pledge form, a person is more likely to do promised actions. The PDF pledge form can be printed/handed out or shared/filled out electronically.
<b>Recruitment letter template</b>	Mail or email a letter to introduce an audience to the program. The template is a fully editable Word document to use/edit as you like.
<b>Branding</b>	Add logos to your website, use on social media, or use branding on your own materials.
<b>FAQ</b>	Use as a reference, handout/email to community members, or pull blurbs for social media posts or newsletters.
<b>Card handout</b>	Leave the card with community members or handout at events to get people thinking about their winter salt use.



**NOTE:** The *Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota* website is not listed as a tool or resource. The website's intended audience is LGU staff, not the public.

## Using the Tools

*Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota* is set up as a toolbox to pull from as you like. Below are some ideas on how to use the different components together or separately.

### Presentation with discussion and videos [allow 45-60 minutes]

- Begin presentation with maps/aerial photos to establish a sense of place for your audience. Watershed or online maps such as the [Hennepin County online property map](#) are useful and interesting to most people. Show them where stormwater runoff from their site end up (pond, lake, stream, etc.).
- Introduce facilitators and purpose of meeting.
- Ask participants to introduce themselves, their connection to the place, and what they love about living/working/worshipping there.
- Ask grounding questions about their winter maintenance program and operations.
- Proceed through presentation and videos, allowing for questions and conversation to flow.
- Incorporate the “Full Video” or “Liability Video” as appropriate.
- Bring along “Conversation Starters” to prompt discussion.
- Optional: Include a walk around the building and grounds to discuss problem areas.



The presentation can be adapted to a virtual environment. It may be harder to warm up your audience virtually, so allow extra time at the beginning for small talk or plan an icebreaker.

### Pledge and giveaway

- Following presentation/discussion, ask participants to fill out the “Pledge Form” identifying actions they are interested in pursuing further.
- Pledge forms do not have to be completed at the presentation meeting. You could follow up days or weeks later to see if they’ve identified pledge actions to take.
- Consider offering a giveaway (winter tool, decal/sticker, gift card, etc.) in appreciation for attending the presentation or completing the pledge form, regardless of which/how many actions they select.

### Technical assistance from a local expert

- Offer yourself as a local expert who can answer chloride pollution questions, link people to applicable resources/people, and provide insight through the lens of water resources management.
- Consider reaching out in-person or by phone/letter/email. Refer to the “Recruitment Letter Template” to get started. In your communications, share links to the *Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota* videos, upcoming Smart Salting trainings, and other relevant news or resources.
- Acknowledge that property managers and winter maintenance is complex and many people are stakeholders. Keep in mind that property owners/managers ultimately make the decision on what they are willing to pursue and what changes they implement.

## Continued support

- Six to twelve months after an interaction (presentation/discussion and pledge form), check in with the property owner/manager on their progress, challenges, successes, questions, opportunities, etc., and offer support.
- As a local expert, you can foster connections between program participants so they can share knowledge and build a community that practices low salt/no salt winter maintenance techniques. Share stories about others who have taken action, experimented with new materials or equipment, or overcome obstacles.
- Consider reaching out one to two times each year to engage with past program participants. This could be through newsletter, direct mail/email/call, community of practice, etc. You may be able to partner with other water resources professionals on a watershed, county, or state scale.

## Getting Started

Now that you have the tools, where to begin? Below are steps to get the (snow) ball rolling.

### Step 1 – Recruitment

Outcome: Local groups are identified and invited to participate in the program.

#### ACTIONS

- Develop local list of homeowner’s associations, condo associations, and faith-based establishments. Most cities have this information available in a Geographic Information System (GIS) database through their engineering, planning or building departments. City departments, commissions, or watershed management organizations may have a pulse on early-adopter candidates – those who’ve participated in other environmental programs or residents who’ve reached out about oversalting.
- Use direct mail, social media, and/or other contact information if available to market the program.
  - Template recruitment letter available in toolbox
  - Social media length video available in toolbox
  - Logos available in toolbox

### Step 2 – Engagement

Outcome: Information is shared with the group through presentation.

Outcome: Key relationships established.

#### ACTIONS

- Review the *Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota* tools and make them your own. If you like, use the program logos and other “Branding” elements to bring a cohesive look to your already existing materials.
- Schedule an initial presentation/discussion with the board or committee.
- Determine a location with the applicable technology requirements (screen, projector if needed). The presentation/discussion could occur at the participant facility or a LGU facility.
- If technology may be an issue, consider printing a few copies of the presentation slides or sitting around a table and viewing the presentation from a laptop.
- Consider sending a copy of the pledge form in advance of meeting or hand out during the meeting.

- Deliver the presentation and facilitate discussion. Humbly observe your audience’s challenges and opportunities.

### Step 3 – Technical Support

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Outcome: Understanding of winter maintenance strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Outcome: Participants pledge actions to reduce chloride pollution.

Outcome: Technical support is offered.

Outcome: Measure and monitor, refine and adapt. Continuous, incremental improvement.

#### ACTIONS

- During and after the initial meeting, lead participants in identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats/challenges. Discuss actions the group might consider to measure, monitor, refine, and adapt to reduce their chloride use.
- Lead participants in pledging actions. At a minimum make plans to reconnect and reevaluate the following year.
- Offer technical assistance/resources/advice/site visits as appropriate.
- Invite the group to join the community of practice.

### Step 4 – Community of Practice

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Outcome: A cohort is established.

Outcome: Investment is made in key relationships.

Outcome: Word-of-mouth recruitment.

#### ACTIONS

- Once or twice per year, send out a printed or digital newsletter. Share training links, general advice, success stories, common questions (and answers), news you can use, facility profiles, owner interviews, etc.
- Annually reach out to groups that have gone through the program (mail, email, phone). Update activities, actions, scope new opportunities, renew pledge. Offer support.
- Offer refresher presentations as needed as group/facility members turnover.
- Celebrate/recognize progress.
- Welcome new interest and enroll as schedule allows.

### Step 5 – Evaluation

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Outcome: Annual evaluation of program, materials, and outcomes.

#### ACTIONS

- Humbly observe what’s working and what’s not working.
- Incorporate new technology/best practices.
- Request input from participants.
- Implement changes.

## Other Considerations

### Time commitment

The *Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota* program was developed to be ready-to-go and to allow flexibility in use and time commitment. Don't have time to reach out to all townhome associations or property managers? Focus on one or two that you may already be in contact with.

Also think about opportunities to partner with others to implement a *Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota* program. Consider taking advantage of these resources, if available:

- County staff
- Watershed districts or management organizations
- Volunteer groups
- Youth groups or clubs
- Sustainability committees
- Minnesota GreenCorps position
- Minnesota Water Stewards

### Set the tone

Remember to meet people where they are. Build a relationship, offer assistance, and keep in mind what **key messages** resonate best with your audience. While protecting water quality may be your top concern, your audience likely has greater priorities such as safety and saving money. Help them see how Low Salt, No Salt fits with these priorities. Refer to the next section for Key Messages.

Key messages distinguish between the things we most urgently want to tell them, and the things they are most ready to hear that will actually change their behavior.

Danie Watson,  
Marketing consultant for  
Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota

# Key Messages

## Focus on key messages with your audience

During development of the *Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota* program, we determined that three messages resonated with all three of our target audiences. Order of priority of the messages varied slightly among groups.

### Key message #1

#### You can keep your community members safe while using less salt.

- You can confidently maintain safety while using less winter salt.
- More salt doesn't mean more melting; shoveling and sweeping are the most effective method for preventing icy sidewalks and parking lots.
- Use salt only on ice not on bare pavement. When you have to use a deicer, choose the right product to match the conditions – weather, temps, pavement type.

HOAs, property managers and communities of faith indicated that *safety* is a top priority.

### Key message #2

#### You will save money by using less salt.

- You can confidently and safely increase efficiency and cut winter maintenance costs using low-salt, no-salt solutions.
- More salt does not mean more safety. Save money and use less salt.

HOAs and property managers indicated that *saving money* is a top priority.

### Key message #3

#### You will help preserve the environment by using less salt.

- You can protect Minnesota's lakes and rivers by using less winter salt — remember, one teaspoon of salt pollutes five gallons of water forever.
- Avoid using excess salt — apply only the amount needed — to prevent it from washing into our waterways.
- For faith communities: You can protect Nature's creation by using less winter salt — remember, one teaspoon of salt pollutes five gallons of water forever.

Faith communities indicated that *environmental protection* is a top priority.

## Messaging Approach by Audience

What we want to tell the audience and what they are ready to hear are different. Key messages focus on information the audience relates to the most and, as a result, have the best chance of influencing their behavior.

### What our research revealed

Effective outreach meets the audience where they are. In other words, you should emphasize the message that resonates most with your audience. During our research, we conducted one-on-one interviews with participants from three different audiences to understand what messaging approach was most effective. Below is a summary of the results.

Messaging	Homeowner Associations	Faith Communities	Property Managers
<b>Emphasize</b>	<p><b>Emphasize ensuring <u>safety</u> while lowering <u>cost</u>.</b> Include but don't prioritize, discussion of protecting the environment, asphalt/concrete, landscaping/lawns, carpets/floors, and pet paws.</p>	<p><b>Emphasize ensuring <u>safety</u> while protecting the <u>environment</u>.</b> Express concern for the safety of all parishioners, but especially older adults. Include, but don't prioritize, discussion of minimizing cost, and protecting carpets/floors, asphalt/concrete, and landscaping/lawns</p>	<p><b>Emphasize minimizing <u>costs</u> while protecting <u>resident/visitor safety</u> and guarding against liability.</b> Include, but don't prioritize, discussion of protecting the environment, asphalt/concrete, landscaping/lawns, and carpets/floors.</p>
<b>Recommend</b>	<p>Recommend practical alternatives and best practices. Provide written "how-to" information about dealing with different types of problem areas.</p>	<p>Recommend practical alternatives and best practices. Provide written "how-to" information about dealing with different types of problem areas.</p>	<p>Recommend practical alternatives and best practices. Provide written "how-to" information about dealing with different types of problem areas.</p>
<b>Persuade</b>	<p>Persuade with examples of other associations that have been successful minimizing salt use.</p>	<p>Persuade with examples of other faith organizations that have been successful minimizing salt use.</p>	<p>Persuade with examples of associations and their property management providers that have been successful minimizing salt use.</p>
<b>Inform</b>	<p>Inform about programs available to subsidize the cost of abatement measures (such as stormwater diversion loans/grants).</p>	<p>Inform about programs available to subsidize the cost of abatement measures (such as stormwater diversion loans/grants).</p>	<p>Inform about programs available to their clients to subsidize the cost of abatement measures (such as stormwater diversion loans/grants).</p>

Read the full [market research report](http://www.low-salt-no-salt-mn.org) online at [www.low-salt-no-salt-mn.org](http://www.low-salt-no-salt-mn.org).



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