



The Corporation of the Town of Bracebridge

Winter Maintenance Guidelines

for Private Contractors and Local Businesses

December 18, 2025

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1.	INTRODUCTION	2
2.	PURPOSE	2
3.	REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	2
3.1	Ontario Regulation 239/02: Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways	2
4.	MUNICIPAL SERVICE STANDARDS FOR PARKING LOTS (Snow and Ice Management)	2
4.1	Parking Lot Classification	2
4.2	Snow Clearing Trigger Depth	3
4.3	Snow Clearing Timeframe	3
4.4	Snow Storage	3
4.5	Treatment	3
4.6	Material Application	3
4.7	Calibration and Equipment	3
4.8	Storage and Handling	4
5.	DOCUMENTATION	4
6.	RESPONSIBILITIES	4
7.	ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS	4
8.	CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	4
9.	OTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES	4

APPENDIX

Appendix 'A' - SaltyMuskoka (Friends of the Muskoka Watershed) Be Salt - Smart

1. INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the Town of Bracebridge's level of service for winter maintenance within municipal parking lots that are aligned with Ontario Regulation 239/02 - Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways under the Municipal Act, 2001; and best practices for salt management. It is a guide for Private Contractors and Local Businesses in understanding municipal expectations and recommended operational approaches.

The Town is committed to reducing chloride levels entering sensitive areas and watercourses. On June 11, 2025, in accordance with Motion 25-GC-068, Council ratified Item for Discussion – Road Salt Usage (May 13, 2025 Council Correspondence – Item B1) committing to ongoing efforts toward the reduction of road salt as much as possible, while maintaining safety on roads, including public reporting on annual use, supporting local efforts to research the ongoing impacts of road salt, and assisting education efforts.

Also under this Motion, Council urges the Province of Ontario to work urgently with key stakeholders to develop limited liability legislation, including enforceable contractor training and a single set of provincially-endorsed standard Best Management Practices for snow and ice management on private lands; and to create and fund an expert stakeholder advisory committee to advise the Province and municipalities on the best courses of action to protect freshwater ecosystems, drinking water and infrastructure from the impacts of salt pollution.

2. PURPOSE

The document summarizes the Town of Bracebridge's minimum level of service for snow and ice control in parking lots in efforts to promote consistency between municipal operations, private contractors and local businesses along with supporting environmental sustainability and responsible salt use.

3. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

3.1 Ontario Regulation 239/02: Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways

While O. Reg. 239/02 is written primarily for municipal roads, the Town of Bracebridge (Town) adopts similar principles for municipal parking lot maintenance to ensure safety and due diligence. Key applicable concepts include:

- Timely response following winter events;
- Reasonable clearance of snow to reduce hazardous conditions; and
- Managing ice formation through mechanical removal and material application.

Municipal parking lots are not formally classified within O. Reg. 239/02 but the Town voluntarily applies an equivalent standard to support safe public access.

4. MUNICIPAL SERVICE STANDARDS FOR PARKING LOTS (Snow and Ice Management)

Snow Management

4.1 Parking Lot Classification

Municipal parking lots are classified based on usage, traffic volume, and operational priority. The level of service requires that snow and ice be addressed within twenty-four (24) hours after the end of accumulation or upon notification of a snow or ice condition.

Winter maintenance and inspection frequencies are aligned with principles derived from O. Reg. 239/02.

4.2 Snow Clearing Trigger Depth

Snow clearing is initiated once 5 cm (2 inches) of accumulated snow is reached or sooner if required for operational or safety reasons.

4.3 Snow Clearing Timeframe

Municipal parking lots will be cleared within twenty-four (24) hours after the end of a winter event, consistent with operational capacity and O. Reg. 239/02 derived inspection practices.

Priority is given to municipal parking lots serving:

- Municipal buildings and emergency services;
- High volume public facilities; and
- Downtown core and high turnover parking areas.

4.4 Snow Storage

Snow will be windrowed and piled to designated locations within each municipal parking lot, unless hauling is required due to space constraints or sightline safety concerns.

Ice Management

Ice will be managed using a combination of mechanical scraping and the application of abrasives or salt, depending on conditions.

4.5 Treatment

Treatment will occur as soon as practical after ice formation or identification of a hazardous condition.

For best management practices for salt use, the Town follows industry recognized best practices to minimize environmental impacts while maintaining safety. The objective of this is to reduce chloride use while combating ice and snow, without compromising public safety.

4.6 Material Application

- Use pre-wetted salt whenever possible to improve adhesion and reduce scatter;
- Apply material based on pavement temperature, not solely air temperature;
- Reduce application rates at temperatures below -10°C where salt effectiveness begins to decrease; and
- Use abrasives (sand) when salt is ineffective due to extreme cold.

4.7 Calibration and Equipment

All spreading equipment must be calibrated at least once (1) per season.

Private Contractors must ensure:

- Functioning electronic controllers;
- Even distribution patterns; and
- Training for operators on calibration and material usage.

4.8 Storage and Handling

Salt piles must be stored on an impermeable surface and covered.

Loading areas should be contained to prevent runoff.

5. DOCUMENTATION

Private Contractors and Local Businesses are encouraged to track:

- Start and end times of snow plowing;
- Material type and quantity applied;
- Weather and surface conditions; and
- Equipment used and the operator's name.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

Private Contractor and Local Businesses are encouraged to:

- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and safety standards;
- Employ trained and competent operators;
- Follow the Town's best management practices for salt application, and
- Keep accurate records to support claims defense and due diligence.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Town is committed to protecting waterways and groundwater by reducing the over-application of salt by:

- Encouraging the use of anti-icing where appropriate;
- Promoting efficient plowing to reduce dependence on chemical treatment; and
- Monitoring trends in material usage each winter season.

8. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Town reviews its level of service document annually to incorporate:

- Updated research on winter maintenance materials;
- Changes in provincial guidelines or regulations; and
- Private Contractor and community feedback.

9. OTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Code of Practice for the Environmental Management of Road Salts (Government of Canada)
<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/pollutants/road-salts/code-practice-environmental-management.html>
- Guidelines on Snow Disposal and De-Icing Operations in Ontario (Province of Ontario)
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/guidelines-snow-disposal-and-de-icing-operations-ontario>

- Town of Bracebridge Salt Management Plan (2025)
<https://bracebridge.civicweb.net/document/30564>

For questions or clarification, please contact:

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The Corporation of the Town of Bracebridge
WINTER MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES
for Private Contractors and Local Businesses

APPENDIX 'A' – SaltyMuskoka (Friends of the Muskoka Watershed) Be Salt - Smart



Community Action Project: Reducing Excessive Road Salt Use in Muskoka



BE SALT- SMART

Why?

- **25%** of recreational lakes tested by the District of Muskoka have chloride levels above what is considered safe for sensitive aquatic life in our soft waters.
- **Road salt damages** drinking water, trees and plants, infrastructure, vehicles, clothing, pets, concrete, and buildings. There are **long-term costs** to the overuse of road salt!
- **Save \$ on property damage, maintain safety, and protect the environment.** Road salt enters our waterways from streets, sidewalks, driveways, and parking lots. **You can take action** and learn how to **reduce your reliance on road salt**.

For more updates from FOTMW, please contact
alesha@fotmw.org or visit fotmw.org to subscribe to our
newsletters.



Winter Maintenance Professionals Make a Difference! Here is how:

Please share this with colleagues

- Save on Operation Costs by using only **370 g or 0.8 pounds** of sodium chloride for deicing **3 parking lot stalls (approx. 46.5 square meters)**. A little goes a long way!
- Know your site, **calculate your space**, and measure your road salt accordingly before application.
- Check the **pavement temperature** first using infrared or thermal technology ~ sodium chloride does not work when temperatures drop **below -10°C**.
- Consider **brine* applications** as an **anti-icing** treatment in lower temperatures. ***2.5 lbs. of salt to 1 gallon of water**.
- **Reduce your liability** by maintaining accurate records of your site visits, road salt applications, equipment used, and calibration dates. **Know your rights!** A personal injury due to slip and fall must be claimed within 60 days of the incident.
- **Tools first! Plow** more often and **use sand** for traction.
- **Sweep up** and reuse excess or unused road salt at anytime as part of your **on-site service**.
- **Store** road salt and liquid brines appropriately and clean up spills or address leaks.
- Discuss **site-specific trouble spots** like poorly located **downspouts** or areas that are prone to ice buildup with property owners prior to the winter season. Consider **signage** or blocking access to areas that can be slippery in the winter.
- Discuss with the property owner the **placement of the plowed snow** to eliminate a melt path that could create icy, slipping hazards, and over salting.
- Learn about the **Smart About Salt Certification** or Landscape Ontario's **Academy of Snow & Ice Control (ASIC)** training for winter maintenance professionals. **Help save \$ on insurance premiums** and use less road salt.

Help protect your watershed forever!

We are a charitable organization. Please support our work
fotmw.org/donate or at Canada Helps



Friends of the
Muskoka
Watershed

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