

A CARGILL CASE HISTORY

Topeka, KS



ENHANCED DEICER CRUCIAL PART OF TOPEKA WINTER MAINTENANCE PLAN

When economic conditions forced the City of Topeka to implement operational restructuring throughout numerous city departments, the street maintenance division took on an entirely new management staff.

Many of the new managers were relatively green when it came to winter maintenance, and to make the transition even more challenging, they began their new responsibilities in November.

"We all started just before the snow started flying," said James Lopez, quality assurance manager. "Some of us – most of us, in fact – weren't familiar with snow control or any of the deicing products."

Fortunately, the management staff had support from a seasoned street crew and a solid winter maintenance plan already in place. The plan dictated what products to use at certain temperatures and on different road surfaces, as well as practices to implement under various conditions such as heavy snows, freezing rain, dry snows and others.

Part of the City's winter maintenance plan included using a product called ClearLane® enhanced deicer. Produced by Cargill Deicing Technology, the enhanced deicer is a salt product that's different than regular rock salt because it contains a pre-wetting agent and coloring agent. These chemical additives help keep roads clear by providing a faster reaction time and longer residual effects, and also help protect distribution equipment from damp salt corrosion.

The City applied the deicer throughout the season in addition to using sand and salt. As winter continued, Lopez said they noticed the melting took place much quicker overall because of the deicer's residual effects. As a result, the City was able to conserve labor and costs by using less deicer as well as less sand and salt.

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A Cargill Deicing Technology Product

Providing customers with deicing solutions that save lives, enhance commerce and reduce environmental impact.

"It works very quickly. We'd start plowing at about 10 o'clock at night, and by morning rush, we had running water in the gutters and the streets were passable. Between storms there was enough residual left on the street to start melting as soon as it started snowing."

— James Lopez,
Quality Assurance Manager



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CLCH-1012

"The enhanced deicer is formulated so it provides extra heat on the roads," Lopez said. "It works very quickly. We'd start plowing at about 10 o'clock at night, and by morning rush, we had running water in the gutters and the streets were passable. Between storms there was enough residual left on the street to start melting as soon as it started snowing."

At one point during the winter, the City decided to conserve the enhanced deicer and returned to using straight rock salt, and found considerable differences in terms of reaction time and clumping issues.

"We could see a big difference," Lopez said. "The deicer started melting much faster and the drivers didn't have any problems with clumping, which can be an issue with salt."

With one season under their belt, the new City of Topeka street division management team will continue to utilize their winter maintenance plan to service their area, which consists of more than 1,500 lane miles. They also intend to include the enhanced deicer as a major plan component.

"Many of our neighboring communities picked up on the product based on the good results we had," Lopez said. "Next year we all want to keep the deicer in stock. That way if one operation runs out we can borrow among each other to make sure we're using the best possible products to help keep roads safe and passable."