

A little Magic in Keene

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New Hampshire has a reputation for using more salt to keep its roads clear than other New England states. Now, a new additive promises to make a little salt go a long way. The product goes by the name, Magic Minus Zero and the city of Keene is trying it out for the first time.

A rough transcript (not word for word accurate):

Magic-minus-zero is a brown, sweet-smelling liquid sprayed on regular rock salt.

The result is "magic salt" - a new kind of road treatment that sounds truly magical.

Keene highway foreman Bruce Tatro says so far, magic salt has already performed one trick. It's saved the city money.

With it, road crews use less salt.

And that's also good for the environment.

Bruce Tatro- 9:58 I've always been interested in new technology ... I'll try it, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Right now this seems to work.

NH Ice Melt of Manchester makes Magic-minus-zero, and calls Keene its first customer. It's made with magnesium chloride.

The company claims their product cuts down dramatically on the corrosiveness of road salt, doesn't stain roads white, and is biodegradable.

They also say magic salt works in temperatures as low as 35-degrees-below-zero.

When the temperature gets below fifteen degrees, regular rock salt stops working.

Until today, Keene has used magic salt only for potential ice problems.

Highway workers spray down a layer of the sticky mixture ahead of time, when roads are expected to get icy.

Tatro ... 3:54 one of the big things that I like about magic salt is you can do that pre-treatment, so it keeps the roads safe ... you don't have to wait until you have ice already on the road to apply it, you don't need moisture to react with it ... 8:12 there's always something on the pavement to prevent it from forming ice. The crew has been able to cut in half the amount of salt it has to spread on each mile of local road.

That savings more than recovers the cost of the magic-minus-zero application. Today's storm was the first real test of the magic salt will be if it prevents ice and snow from sticking to the road after road crews come by with snowplows.

The treatment is supposed to leave a clear road behind a plow.

Reached in the middle of cleanup from today's storm, Tatro said the magic salt was living up to its name.

And Keene's roads were clear.

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