Worker Exposure Considerations

Handling Safety

Safety precautions and over-exposure to hazardous materials in the workplace is a growing concern. Generally speaking, the primary safety concerns with ice melter ingredients involves their effect when exposed to skin, eyes, and leather.

Unfortunately, products that claim the lowest melting temperatures (calcium chloride)expose the applicator to greater hazards. Prolonged or repeated exposure can cause serious side effects that include skin (dermal) burns and eye irritation. Handling precautions, according to the Material Safety Data Sheet, for calcium chloride include the use of respirators, gloves and goggles when respiratory, skin and eye protection is required.

Traction

Recently, in an effort to increase traction, some formulators have added gripping components to their de-icer blends. Unfortunately, these traction agents are inexpensive forms of sand, gravel or lime and do not contribute to the purpose of ice removal. In fact, they make removal more difficult as they clog drains and remain piled after the ice has melted. Furthermore, these materials are easily tracked indoors and, due to their grinding nature, can cause severe damage to hard surfaced indoor flooring or cleaning problems on carpeting.

HOT TIP

Always read the manufacturers Material Safety Data Sheet to reveal safety precautions.

Reduce exposure to skin and eye irritants by using products with reduced concentrations of calcium chloride.

Traction additives may provide a quick fix to slippery surfaces but be aware of the fact they are derived from non-soluble materials that do not contribute to brine formation.