



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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DEM ADVISES IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL SNOW DISPOSAL SITES TO PREVENT CONTAMINATION OF WATER SUPPLIES THIS WINTER

PROVIDENCE – With the region's first snowfall fast approaching, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is reminding businesses, households, community groups, and state and local government agencies to begin preparations for snow disposal. DEM has developed [guidelines](#) to assist organizations with selecting and preparing collection sites to minimize impacts on the environment and public health.

Snow collected from roads, parking lots, bridges, and sidewalks may contain harmful contaminants such as road salt, sand, and litter that can compromise water supplies. To minimize the risks, DEM advises organizations to:



- Locate snow collection sites near or on permeable (porous) surfaces in upland areas away from water resources and wells. This will allow snowmelt to filter into the soil, leaving behind sand and debris. The latter should be removed as soon as possible, but no later than springtime.
- Prepare and maintain snow collection sites to maximize their effectiveness. Installing a silt fence or sediment barriers on the down-sloping side of the site, maintaining a vegetative buffer between the site and adjacent water bodies, and clearing away debris before and after using the area for snow disposal are effective preparation techniques.
- Under average winter conditions, store and dispose of snow only in upland areas and not in or near waterbodies or wetlands. DEM's [Snow Disposal Policy](#) includes guidance on emergency disposal of snow under extraordinary circumstances when upland snow storage options are exhausted.