Preventing Tracked-In Ice Melter Residue

Everyone is familiar with the problem of tracked-in residue from chemical ice melters. Residue soils carpets and scratches and removes floor finish. Labor is greatly increased and the results are still less than desirable. It is possible to get through the winter without the expense and mess by following these simple procedures.

The most important thing you can do is to prevent excess ice melter from entering your building in the first place. Proper use and containment are the two keys to success at this. Excess residue is reduced by not using too much product in the first place. The reason for over use is an effort to melt the ice faster. If you allow more time by spreading melter sooner, the recommended amount will do the job. The recommended amounts of various ice melters are shown here as ounces (by volume) of product per square yard of surface. A square yard is nine square feet or 3 feet by 3 feet.

Apply calcium chloride based melters, such as Peladow, at 2-4 ounces (¼-½ cup) per square yard.
Apply sodium chloride based melters, such as Rock Salt or Halite, mixed-chloride melters, such as Safer-Than-Salt, and potassium chloride based melters, such as Triple Ice Melter, at 8 ounces (1 cup) per square yard.

For example: If you are using a scoop that holds 32 ounces, you should be covering 4 square yards with each scoop of sodium or potassium chloride based melter or between 8 and 16 square yards with calcium chloride melters.

Sodium and potassium chloride based ice melters leave a white powdery residue. Calcium chloride ice melters and blends including calcium chloride produce an oily residue because they do not dry completely. Calcium chloride based melters track in less because less is used. However, their residue is more difficult to remove once it builds up. Frequent cleaning with an economical and effective cleaner is the solution.

The second way to reduce tracked in melter is to use entrance mats and runners. Use a mat with a very open weave to catch larger particles. Then follow with a carpet mat to absorb liquid. Matting should be changed or vacuumed with a wet vacuum when it becomes saturated. A wet mat is of no benefit. Even the best care will not eliminate all residue. Regular floor cleaners will not do a good job removing residue. Damon Industries manufactures a specialty product called **Daco® Metal Soap Absorbent** for this task. It has chelating (pronounced key-late-ing) agents to dissolve salt and calcium residues and rinse them away. The procedure for removing residue from hard surface floors is as follows:

1. Sweep the floor to pick up large ice melter particles.
2. Remove wet/dirty matting and runners.
3. Using cold water, prepare a 1:60 solution (2 ounces per gallon of water) of **Daco Metal Soap Absorbent**.
4. Mop the floor with the solution.
5. Let the solution sit for 1 to 2 minutes.
6. Mop or vacuum up the solution.
7. Rinse if needed.
8. Clean mats and runners using the above solution. Flush open weave or rubber mats with the solution. Allow to sit 2 minutes and then rinse with clear water. Carpet style mats can be shampooed as described below.

When calcium residue is tracked onto carpeting the residue will have an oily appearance and the carpeting will rapidly attract dirt. Vacuuming or normal shampooing will not remove the residue. Normal extraction will only partly alleviate the problem. It is important to remove the accumulated residue often in areas where sunlight strikes the carpet. Sunlight somehow bonds the residue to carpet fibers making it much more difficult to remove. The following procedure is used to remove residue from carpeting.

1. Vacuum to remove large particles.
2. Using warm water, prepare a 1:60 solution (2 ounces per gallon of water) of **Daco Metal Soap Absorbent**.
3. Shampoo with a rotary machine using the bonnet method followed by extraction, or use an extractor with a brush. Follow your usual bonnet and extraction procedures using the **Daco Metal Soap** instead of your usual shampoo.

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