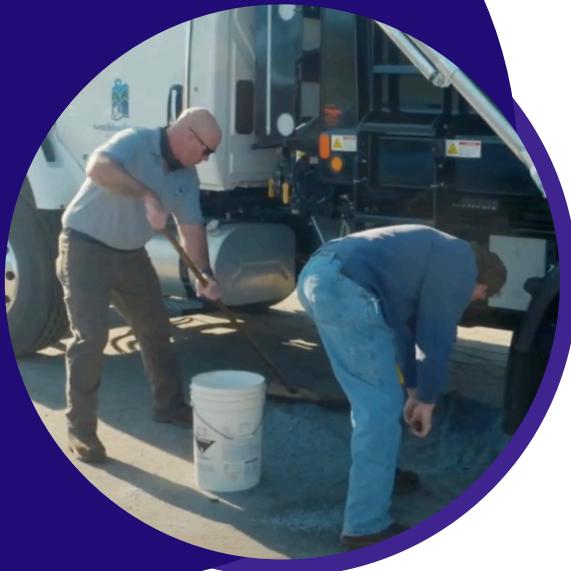


SUSTAINABLE ROAD SALTING PRACTICES

CALIBRATION

Calibration by doing a “drop test” is a process to measure how much salt comes out of the spreader in a given time period.



BENEFITS

- By knowing how much salt is coming out of the spreader in one minute, the amount of salt being distributed from a truck with a given gate opening and auger setting is known. This enables plow drivers to know how much salt they are distributing per lane mile.
- Calibration is relatively simple to carry out.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Snow fighters can open the gate wider than the opening size used during calibration, thereby distributing additional salt than may be intended.
- Calibration is required even if using salt tracking devices.

CHALLENGES

- Calibration might need to be done more than once a year to ensure salt is being distributed at a known rate.

COSTS

Calibration costs nothing more than the staff time to carry out the drop test (assuming a shovel, bucket, and scale are available).

October 2025



LOCATIONS

The following communities and businesses are calibrating equipment:

- Burlington
- Charlotte
- Colchester
- S&D Snowblowing, Essex
- Hyde Park
- Milton
- Shelburne
- South Burlington
- Williston

Does your community or business calibrate with a drop test to inform your snow and ice management practices, and do you operate within the Lake Champlain Basin of New York or in Vermont? Let us know and we can list your community or business here too!

LEARN

Lake Champlain Sea Grant teamed up with South Burlington, Milton, and S&D Snowblowing to create three videos to demonstrate calibration. In the first, South Burlington's team shares [how to initially calibrate new equipment](#) and then how to calibrate at least annually with a catch or drop test. In the second, [South Burlington and Milton's teams demonstrate just the catch or drop test](#) for municipal salters. In the third, the team from [S&D Snowblowing demonstrates how to calibrate a commercial salter](#).

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