

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND TECHNICAL SERVICES BY CONNÉTABLE OF ST. JOHN
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 16th APRIL 2013**

Question

Will the Minister provide details for the last three years of the volume and costs of providing salt to spread on roads when it snows, and advise why sand/grit is no longer used, despite the fact that this is readily available?

Does the Transport and Technical Services Department mitigate the impact that salt has on the water course, particularly where well/boreholes are next to the highway and, if so, how?

Answer

Over the last three years TTS has used approximately 200 tonne of road salt. 140 tonne was used this winter with approximately 60 ton used over the winter of 2011/2012 and no significant amount used during 2010/2011.

The road salt is applied at a rate of 20 – 40 g/m² for snow covered surfaces and a reduced rate is used for frost and ice.

The last purchase of road salt was made in 2010 when 150 tonne was ordered at a cost of £165 per tonne (£24,750 in total). At present the Department has 60 tonne in store and plans to re-order in the order of 150 tonne mid-year when the price is usually at its lowest.

Until the early 1990s, the Department in its former guises of Public Building and Works and PSd had traditionally used grit removed from the East Coast beach area on receipt of snow/ice warnings from the Met Office. The consistency of this product was excellent and, as it had been freshly removed from the beach, the salt it contained assisted its effect on the roads.

Following environmental advice this practice was stopped as the areas of extraction were then recognised as being environmentally sensitive both in terms of disturbance to the natural breeding habitat of marine life and due to the alteration of beach profiles. Permission would not now be granted by the Department of the Environment for extraction of sand/grit from the Island's beaches for this purpose.

The Department then used sand/grit purchased from local commercial sand pits however this proved to be less effective with problems of consistency (lumps), effectiveness and the mess it left on the roads after the snow which required mechanised road sweeping. The Department also suffered significant blockages to road drainage systems as a result of the grit.

As a result, the Department moved to the use of salt spinners approximately 12 years ago. The new machinery provides precise control of the amount of salt being spread to balance effectiveness in varying conditions with environmental considerations. The Department uses the salt sparingly and only where required when health and safety of road users is at risk.

In respect of potential pollution, many coastal boreholes around Jersey have a large salt input due to sea water intrusion. During snow conditions, the winter and snow melt will provide a large element of 'dilution'. Environmental Protection has not received any reported pollution events related to salt usage on roads. If received, the section would investigate these under the Water Pollution (Jersey) Law 2000.