

When Winter Hits, the Salt Terminal Keeps the GTA Moving



If you've ever been stuck in traffic because of a snowstorm, or a sudden downpour of freezing rain, you know that road salt is extremely important to Canadian municipalities. Salt can melt ice and snow down to a pavement temperature of minus 15 degrees Celsius, and even lower if other performance enhancers are added. Without road salt, goods and workers can't move from Point A to Point B, and cities can easily grind to a halt. Thankfully, Toronto has the Salt Terminal in the Port Lands.

Nearly three per cent of the world's oceans are comprised of salt, and there is an almost limitless supply of it underground. Salt is obtained by a couple of methods: mechanical evaporation, and mining. Evaporation starts with injecting water into an underground salt deposit in order to create a brine that is then extracted, and evaporated in a series of large crystallizers. Salt mining is a drill-and-blast process; the miners drill holes into the rock salt face, insert explosive materials, and blast the salt into easily-transportable pieces.

With so much focus on ongoing gentrification, and the conversion of old factories into lofts and condos, Torontonians sometimes forget their city has a working port, and that the Port Lands continue to house industrial tenants. Located on a narrow strip of land between Unwin Avenue and the Ship Channel are several TPLC lots that have been leased to three companies: Cargill Canada, Compass Minerals (formerly known as Sifto Canada) and K+S Windsor Salt Ltd. (formerly known as The Canadian Salt Company Limited) that specialize in processing and transporting salt for a variety of purposes. From a logistical standpoint, it makes sense for their operations to be side-by-side in the Port Lands because they all require a large storage depot, and salt is moved primarily by vessels, rather than on trucks, which is in keeping with TPLC's commitment to environmental stewardship. The TPLC works closely with stakeholders to ensure these multi-million dollar salt transactions proceed smoothly and efficiently. This is a key service provided to tenants by TPLC which contributes to long-term tenant relationships. "We have a great relationship with TPLC. We've had an agreement with them for over three decades, and their work is truly appreciated," notes Leena Kaleva, Stockpile Manager, K+S Windsor Salt Ltd.

The K+S Windsor Salt depot in the Port Lands is dedicated exclusively to moving and storing road salt, which is mined in Windsor, Ontario. Kaleva goes on to say, "The Port Lands facility is very important to the company, thanks to its downtown location and close proximity to the Greater Toronto Area." Moreover, K+S Windsor Salt has been able to grow as new highways and subdivisions have expanded the demand for road salt.

According to the K+S Windsor Salt website, Canadians use over ten million tonnes of salt every year, and there are more than 14,000 uses for Sodium Chloride. While salt is often used to preserve food, and is actually essential for human health (when taken in moderation, of course), another important use is as a de-icer in winter weather. Government agencies are among the biggest buyers of salt for this reason.

So the next time you reach for the table salt or go out to purchase a bag of salt in preparation for the oncoming winter storms, you can thank the local Salt Terminal for your supplies