

Carlow County Council Press Release

Use of Urea for de-icing roads

During the height of the recent cold spell, Carlow County Council's stock of rock-salt became critically low and it was decided to seek alternative de-icers to help remove ice from roads. The fertilizer product urea is the de-icer of choice for many airports throughout the world and is in constant use by the US Air Force. Urea was available from a local supplier. The permission of the National Roads Authority, who in turn sought the views of the National Emergency Response Co-ordination Committee, was sought, and approval received, for the limited use of urea as a de-icer.

Concerns were subsequently raised regarding the possible effects that urea, contained in run-off water from the roads treated, might have on drinking water supplies.

Carlow County Council have carried out a risk assessment exercise and all public water supplies where there was a possibility of run off were tested for ammonia and nitrate. The results of the water testing show no elevated levels of nitrates or ammonia and the water meets the requirements of the Drinking Water Regulations and is safe for consumption.