

Hydronic Systems to Beat the Snow



Here in Chicago, we've been lucky enough to enjoy a relatively snow-free winter thus far. However, it's not even January yet and there is plenty of time for that to change. If you've got clients with hydronic systems dreading the maintenance and labor associated with keeping their properties clear, pitch a snowmelt system. If they already have a high-efficiency, high capacity boiler, adding a snowmelt system can be a relatively simple process. Even if you are installing new equipment, snowmelting is an application where the benefits outweigh the costs. Below is a quick rundown of the different components in a snowmelt system.

The Equipment

A boiler is at the heart of every hydronic snowmelt system. The boiler is responsible for transferring heat to the liquid that is being used to melt the snow. A high-efficiency model isn't needed, but obviously the better the AFUE (or Thermal Efficiency), the less money your client will be spending on energy in the long run. For areas where heavy snowfall is a regular occurrence, a more expensive model can end up costing less in the long run. Of course, with larger high-efficiency models, you can spread the field and utilize the space-heating boiler for multiple applications.

The Controls

When it comes to snowmelt controls, it's hard to beat tekmar. They have solutions for every application from manual start and stop to variable speed mixing. If your clients aren't looking for manual control, tekmar's automatic offerings feature snow detection sensors. These begin snowmelt operations automatically when snow is first detected, and are available as an in-slab or aerially mounted sensor.

The Components

No hydronic snowmelt system is complete without PEX tubing and an antifreeze solution. For this application, we recommend hePEX plus tubing from Uponor and a Rhogard solution from Rhomar Water. Both of these products feature exceptional heat transfer, making them an excellent snow melt option.

Snowmelt systems are more affordable and easier to install than ever before. If you're not offering them to your customers, you could be missing out on business from existing and new customers alike. For help designing a system, you can contact the Able Distributors outside sales team.

As a bonus, we've created a handy snowmelt energy cost calculator for project estimations.

Snowmelt Energy Cost Calculator

Snowmelt Area (Square Feet)

Snowmelt Surface ▼

Boiler Efficiency %

Natural Gas Price per Therm \$