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**HOW TO MINIMIZE WINTER MESS
AT YOUR DOOR and ON YOUR FLOOR!** by Linda McKendry

SAFETY

Shoppers coming into the mall or the store with wet boots and melting snow mixed with gravel, sand, or salt can cause huge issues in the entrance to your store. It's important to have a plan and the proper floor mats for dealing with this so that you and your staff aren't stressed and the shoppers feel at home and comfortable.

Extra long, absorbent, and water-proof mats are required from your front door clear into the main aisles so no one will slip or fall when they finally step off the mat onto a hard surface floor. Most people will wipe their boots once they come in and don't feel it's a waist so have a good rubber backed matt just outside your door.

You may have to use a broom instead of a shovel on the sidewalk, but it will keep a lot of gravel, sand, and salt out of your store.

Canadian Tire <http://www.canadiantire.ca/en/pdp/rubber-master-mat-3-x-4-ft-0686384p.html#srp> and

Home Depot (flanges on edges prevent curling and tripping)

<https://www.homedepot.ca/en/home/p.2-feet-x5-feet-3mm-rubber-mat.1000805054.html?autoSuggest=pip>

Walmart <http://www.walmart.ca/en/ip/weathertech-outdoormat-for-home-and-business-grey/6000195362746> WeatherTech OutdoorMat™ for Home and Business

Many Big Box Home Décor and Building supply stores the best mats on the market, and some are available as runners, so you can have the exact lengths cut to fit your aisles and traffic patterns. This is especially necessary if you have commercial carpet in your store to prevent soiling and fibre breakdown from salt and sand.

Renting mats. These are the issues.

1. You get a fresh, dry and clean matt as often as you schedule it.
2. It saves you from having to worry about it or deal with it.
3. Options of sizes and in some cases colors to work with your image.
4. Cost needs to be worked out relative to your other expenses.

VISUAL APPEARANCE

This is the most concerning issue when you want your store looking it's best at the highest shopping season of the year.

First know that in countries where this is an issue, people get used to it and overlook the necessary 'evils' of soaking mats. Most of them appreciate that you are doing your best to keep them safe. They are also glad you provide a place for them to wipe their feet and leave the worst water, gravel, sand and salt behind as they continue to shop.

Tips and Tricks:

1. Line up the rubber backed mud mats to fit with your fixture placement and traffic pattern, so the store still looks good and has a feeling of being organized.
2. Consider area rugs made of synthetic and natural materials that are easy to clean, inexpensive, and that fit in with the image and color, pattern, and style of your business. If these are placed over a hard surface floor that won't be damaged from water, like ceramic tile, then you don't have to put a rubber piece under them.
3. Place a nice wide runner just outside your entrance on the sidewalk with planters and winter twigs, or evergreen trees in them and keep it swept of snow and sand regularly to
 - a. give the shoppers a place to wipe their feet before they come in.
 - b. make them feel more at home and comfortable coming into your store with wet or salty soles!
 - c. cheer them up and keep them in the mood for holiday shopping.
4. Place a room by the door on the inside where you and your staff can easily and quickly keep the outdoor mat swept.
NOTE: Pick a broom that is the color, pattern, and style to suit your business image so it will look perfectly at home on display!

5. Have extra area rug and mats where shoppers sit to rest, and definitely a boot tray just outside the door of a dressing room so there is a designated spot for the shoppers to put their footwear that they can SEE!

These are some of the ideas that I have recommended and seen used by my retail clients over the years and where I choose to shop as a consumer. The messes at the entrances to shopping centres and independent stores have never kept people in the Northern winter climates from shopping!

But it's up to you, the owner or manager, to make it a safe and pleasant experience so your sales and profits are black all year round! Rainy days in the summer can also cause the same issues so you can always be prepared and ready.