



Minerals

Halite

NaCl

Crystallography:

Isometric; $4/m\bar{3}2/m$. Cubic habit; other forms very rare. Also massive, granular to compact.

Physical Properties:

Cleavage: {001} perfect. Fracture conchoidal; rather brittle.

Hardness: 2.5.

Specific Gravity: 2.16.

Luster: Vitreous.

Color: Colorless or white; shades of yellow, red, blue or purple with impurities.

Transparent to translucent.

Streak: White.

Composition/Features:

Common salt. Distinguished by its cubic cleavage, low hardness, and salty taste. Fusible at 1.5. Dissolves readily in water.

Occurrence/Use:

A common mineral occurring as extensive beds and irregular masses formed by the evaporation of enclosed bodies of sea water. Granular crystalline aggregates of halite are known as rock salt. Used extensively in the chemical industry as a source of sodium and chlorine. Also used in tanning hides, in fertilizers, in salting icy highways, and in food preparation.