The local structure of molten CdCl$_2$ was investigated by X-ray absorption fine structure (XAFS) and X-ray diffraction (XRD) analyses. The nearest Cd$^{2+}$-Cl$^-$ distance decreases from 2.61 Å in the room temperature solid state to 2.47–2.50 Å in the molten state. The coordination number decreases from 6 in the solid to 4 in the melt. The obtained structural parameters from the XAFS and the XRD analyses suggest that a tetrahedral coordination (CdCl$_4$)$_{2^-}$ is predominant in molten CdCl$_2$. The XAFS result of a molten 50% CdCl$_2$-KCl mixture shows that the 4-fold (CdCl$_4$)$_{2^-}$ structure holds also in the mixture.

**Key words:** Molten Salt; XAFS; X-ray Diffraction; Structure; Pyrochemistry.