

LEAF BLOWER BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

The City of Seattle has prepared this guide with tips and suggestions for the best use of leaf blowers. Leaf blowing is a convenience that has certain responsibilities. A combination of regulation, courtesy, and environmental stewardship will help us all peacefully coexist.

Newer Equipment is Better

- Newer blowers are required to emit about 1/3 fewer pollutants. In 2013 the EPA changed the emission standards for Small-Engine Equipment such as leaf blowers.
- Each piece of equipment should have an approved evaporative emissions label.
- Consider electric and battery-powered blowers. Manufacturers are continuing to make them more powerful and last longer between charges.

Maintenance

- Routinely check the muffler, air intake, and air filters to make sure blowers are working at peak performance
- Never modify blowers; use as factory directed Dust and Air Quality
- Do not use for construction dust or plaster dust
- Keep nozzle pointed down to reduce the spray of dust



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

This guide is intended to provide tips and suggestions for using a leaf blower. These best practices have been developed in consultation with:

Seattle Center, Seattle City Light, Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections, Seattle Department of Finance and Administrative Services, Seattle Department of Transportation, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Seattle Public Utilities

Useful information

Suggestions for Landscape Professionals

www.seattle.gov/util/LandscapeProfessionals
See "Maintenance Plans" and other sustainable landscaping topics

EPA Standards for Small Equipment

www.epa.gov/regulations-emissions-vehicles-and-engines/regulations-emissions-small-equipment-tools





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ALTERNATIVE METHODS

- Compost your leaves whenever possible; they are great sources of nutrients for gardens
- Lawn mowers with mulch settings are great options for light leaves
- Raking leaves is a moderate cardio activity and helps build upper body strength and tightens core
 - 30 minutes can burn between 100-180 calories
 - Once started, use a tarp to collect leaves
- Consider natural landscaping to limit area that needs to be manicured



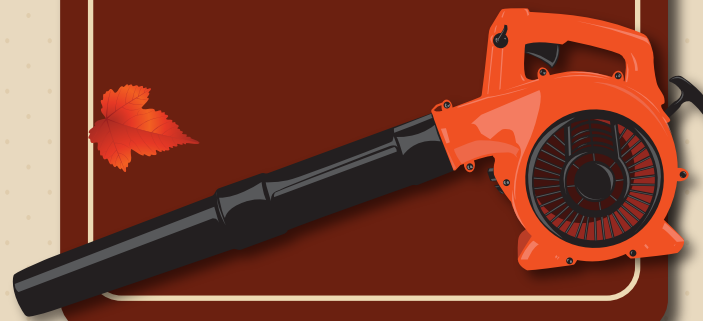
The City of Seattle has other helpful information on maintaining a yard, including natural landscaping options:

www.seattle.gov/util/yard
www.seattle.gov/trees/planting.htm



COURTEOUS USAGE

- Stay 50 feet from people or pets (Equal to about three car lengths)
- Think about time of day:
 - Hours - Avoid too early or too late
 - Speak with neighbors about best hours for usage
- Visualize how to clear the property
 - Start on edges and blow away from neighboring properties, streets, and storm drains
 - Pick up larger items first
- Limit the number of leaf blowers in a small area; multiple leaf blowers amplify noise



NOISE REDUCTION

General Recommendations

- Look for blowers that can operate at 65 decibels (dBA) or below
 - 65 dBA is equivalent to the sound of a washing machine
 - Manufacturer's label will indicate model's sound decibels at 50 feet from the source
- Nozzle equipment can help muffle sound
- Every 6 dba sound reduction reduces the noise level by 50%

Follow the City's Noise Ordinance

- Generally permitted in most Seattle zoning districts from 7 AM to 7 PM, Monday through Friday; 9 AM to 7 PM, weekends and legal holidays

Link to City's Noise Ordinance:

www.seattle.gov/dpd/codes-rules/codes/noise

