

City of Cambridge Leaf Blower Best Practices

General Courtesy

- Be aware of neighbors, pedestrians and others nearby. Some may have respiratory illness or allergies that could be triggered by flying dust and debris.
- Be aware of surroundings. Do not use in close proximity to children playing, people reading, school groups gathering, or others nearby.
- When using equipment do not point blower at people or pets.
- Do not blow toward open windows or doors, and if possible, do not use within 10 feet of windows or doors.
- Do not blow debris onto adjacent property, the street, catch basins, gutters, vehicles, people or pets.
- Abide by time-of-day, day-of-week and seasonal of use restrictions.
- Adjust hours/times of use to accommodate residents, institutions, abutters (within time restrictions).

Sound Reduction

- Use portable leaf blowers rated 65 decibels or lower, as specified by manufacturer.
- Use at lowest possible speed/throttle to accomplish task
- Use longest possible nozzle for equipment.
- Orient nozzle to reduce sound.
- Check equipment regularly for proper operation (i.e. muffler, filters, motor).

Reduction of Dust/Particulate Matter

- Spray dusty areas with water before using blower.
- Use the full nozzle extension so that the air stream can work close to the ground.
- Do not use for construction dust, plaster dust or dry garden topsoil.
- Do not use blower to move large mounds of debris from one location to another.
- Use rakes or brooms to loosen heavier debris.

Environmental Use

- Use equipment that meets current (2006) EPA emissions standards for leaf blowers.
- Leaf blowers should be run at half throttle most of the time. Low throttle speeds not only significantly reduce noise but also provide operator with maximum control.
- Use equipment at lowest power level to accomplish job.
- Learn to control air velocity to lift leaves without lifting dust.
- Use rakes or brooms to loosen heavier debris.

Worker Safety

- Leaf blower operators will be provided with ear protection and will be offered eye protection and face masks.

Operator Training

- Provide training in proper use to all employees.
- Observe time of use restrictions (months/days/hours).
- Limit use of leaf blowers to no more than one within a lot of 10,000 square feet or smaller.
- Use rakes and brooms to supplement cleanup and to loosen debris from corners and edges.
- Develop/provide brochure on proper use - post on website, provide in workplace, make print versions available to public (e.g. English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole).