

LEAF BLOWERS

§ XX-1. Purpose.

The City of Norwalk finds that leaf blowers represent a significant source of environmental pollution in the form of high and low-frequency noise, carbon and noncarbon emissions, and dust particulate, which represent a present threat to the public peace and to the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the City, the landscape workers who use these machines, and wildlife. Noise generated by leaf blowers interferes with the physical and psychological well-being of persons, as leaf blowers generate low-frequency noise at high decibel levels, exposure to which has been determined to generate severe adverse health effects, including hearing loss, tinnitus, reduced cognitive performance, heart disease, and hypertension. Leaf blowers displace significant amounts of particulate matter, spreading pollen, mold, chemical pesticides, and other fine particulates which are harmful to human health. Wildlife is also harmed by the use of leaf blowers. Internal-combustion leaf blowers are recognized as “hyper-polluters,” emitting significant carbon and noncarbon emissions in greater magnitudes than automobiles over similar operating periods. Accordingly, the City will regulate the use of leaf blowers to minimize and mitigate the harmful effects of their use.

§ XX-2. Definitions.

As used in this Chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated:

ELECTRIC LEAF BLOWER

A Leaf Blower that is powered by only electric means, including, but not limited to, corded, battery-powered and cordless rechargeable Leaf Blowers.

INTERNAL COMBUSTION LEAF BLOWER

A Leaf Blower that is powered by an internal combustion engine or rotary engine using gasoline, diesel, alcohol, or other liquid or gaseous fluids.

LEAF BLOWER

Any motorized device that is used or designed to move leaves, grass clippings, dust, dirt, or other matter by directing high velocity air by such device.

PERSON

An individual, partnership, limited liability company, society, association, joint stock company, corporation, estate, receiver, trustee, assignee, referee or any other legal entity and any other person acting in a fiduciary or representative capacity, whether appointed by a court or otherwise, and any combination thereof.

§ XX-3. Prohibition on the operation of Internal Combustion Leaf Blowers.

Effective January 1, 2027, for individual properties of two acres or less, and January 1, 2028, for individual properties of more than two acres:

- A. No Person shall operate an Internal Combustion Leaf Blower in the City of Norwalk.
- B. No owner of real property, tenant in possession of real property, or Person in control of real property shall allow the operation of an Internal Combustion Leaf Blower on such real property in the City of Norwalk.
- C. No Person who owns or operates a gardening, landscape maintenance, or similar service shall allow an employee or agent of that service to operate an Internal Combustion Leaf Blower in the City of Norwalk.

§ XX-4. Required safety features for the use of Leaf Blowers.

No Person who owns or operates a gardening, landscape maintenance, or similar service shall allow an employee or agent of that service to operate an Internal Combustion Leaf Blower in the City of Norwalk without OSHA-approved safety equipment, including, but not limited to, ear and respiratory protection to mitigate the possible hearing loss and toxic fumes produced by said machine. This Subsection shall go into effect on September 1, 2023.

§ XX-5. Prohibition of the operation of Leaf Blowers during certain months and hours of the day.

- A. **Lawns, Gardens and Other Landscapes.** A Leaf Blower, whether it be an Internal Combustion Leaf Blower (prior to their absolute prohibition) or an Electric Leaf Blower, may only be operated on lawns, gardens, parks, woodlands, playing fields, and other landscapes in the City of Norwalk during the following periods of the year:
 - (1) April 1 through June 1; and
 - (2) October 15 through December 15.
- B. **Impervious Surfaces.** Electric Leaf Blowers may be used any day of the year on sidewalks, streets, parking lots, pool decks, and other impervious surfaces.
- C. **Operating Hours.** During the periods of the year when Leaf Blowers are permitted to be operated in the City of Norwalk, they may only be operated during the following hours:
 - (1) Monday through Friday, excluding state and federal holidays: between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
 - (2) Saturday: between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
 - (3) Sundays and state and federal holidays: property owners and tenants in possession of real property only and only between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

- D. **Water Emergency.** Notwithstanding the provisions of this Subsection XX-5, the use of any Leaf Blower may be further restricted by the Mayor in the event of a Water Emergency pursuant to Chapter 57C-4 of the Norwalk City Code.

§ XX-6. Temporary suspension for storm and hurricane or other emergencies.

The Mayor of the City of Norwalk, in their sole discretion, may temporarily suspend provisions of this Chapter to allow the use of Leaf Blowers for cleanup and debris removal in the event of a storm, hurricane, or similar extreme weather event, or other emergency.

§ XX-7. Violations and penalties, responsible parties.

- A. Upon the initial violation of any of the provisions of this Chapter, the Person in violation shall be issued a written warning, with no penalty being imposed.
- B. For any further violation of any of the provisions of this Chapter, the Person in violation shall be fined a penalty of not more than \$250 per subsequent offense. For purposes of this Chapter, each use of a Leaf Blower on a property constitutes a separate violation.
- C. Notwithstanding subsection XX-7A, a Person who owns or operates a gardening, landscape maintenance or similar service shall be solely responsible for violations of this Chapter by its employees and agents.
- D. Any aggrieved Person may file an appeal to the Superior Court for the Judicial District of Stamford/Norwalk in accordance with Connecticut law.

§ XX-8. Effective Date.

Except as provided in Subsection XX-3 and 4, this Chapter shall be effective on September 1, 2024. Provided that Subsection XX-3 shall only take effect if the Council has affirmatively voted by majority vote as of September 1, 2026 to implement Subsection XX-3.