

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (last updated May 17, 2024)

Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers Prohibition Ordinance

What is happening?

The City of Santa Cruz is in the process of considering and potentially adopting a citywide ordinance that would prohibit the use of gas-powered leaf blowers citywide with some limited exemptions.

Will all leaf blowers be prohibited?

No, the ordinance only applies to gas-powered leaf blowers. Electric and battery-powered leaf blowers can still be used within city limits.

Will there be any exemptions?

Yes, there are three exemptions.

- 1) Gas-powered leaf blowers can be used in the maintenance of parcels of 10 acres or more.
- 2) Gas-powered leaf blowers can be used in the maintenance of DeLaveaga Park, Depot Park, Harvey West Park, Neary Lagoon, San Lorenzo Park, Rail Trail, University Terrace Park, Riverwalk, city medians, and West Cliff.
- 3) Gas-powered leaf blowers can be used by or at the direction of emergency responders when responding to an emergency.

Why is the City of Santa Cruz regulating the use of leaf blowers?

The City is taking proactive steps to address environmental concerns and public health impacts associated with gas-powered leaf blowers. The decision aligns with the City's [Health in All Policies initiative](#) and [Climate Action Plan 2030](#), together aiming to decrease local greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality. Prohibiting the use of gas-powered leaf blowers will help the City meet the local and state targets of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 40% of 1990 levels by 2030.

How does prohibiting the use of gas-powered leaf blowers help the environment?

Prohibiting the use of gas-powered leaf blowers is expected to lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, contributing to improved air quality and mitigating climate change impacts. Electric and battery-powered alternatives generally produce lower noise levels, further reducing noise pollution in the city.

What if I currently own a gas-powered leaf blower?

Rebate and trade-in programs are available to help residents and businesses switch to electric or battery-powered leaf blowers. These programs and incentives are frequently changing and updated. Please visit the [Monterey Bay Air Resources District Rebate Program](#) for information on current rebates available to residents and businesses located in Santa Cruz County. You can also check the availability of state incentives at the [California Clean Off-Road Equipment voucher incentive project website](#).

Where can I dispose of gas-powered leaf blowers that are no longer operable or are subject to compliance?

You can recycle your gas-powered leaf blowers at the [City of Santa Cruz Resource Recycling Facility](#). Items must be empty of all fuels and fuels should be taken to the [Household Hazardous Waste facility](#) to be disposed of.

Where can I buy an electric or battery-powered leaf blower?

You can buy electric leaf blowers at most home-improvement and landscaping stores.

How expensive are electric leaf blowers?

Electric leaf blowers are available at a wide range of prices. Depending on your personal needs, prices can range from as low as \$80.00 for personal use equipment to upwards of \$2,000.00 for commercial use equipment.

When will the ordinance go into effect?

If the ordinance is adopted, it will go into effect on January 1, 2025.

How do I report a violation?

Suspected violations will be reported to the City’s Planning and Community Development Department by calling 831-420-5111 or online through the department’s [Community Request Services Portal](#).

How will this ordinance be enforced?

When a complaint is received, a written courtesy notice will be mailed to the property owner with details about the alleged violation, potential future penalties, and incentive programs. Additionally, the property owner will be required to sign and return an affidavit included with the written courtesy notice confirming they are aware of the ordinance and potential penalties. Subsequent violations at the same location would be punishable by any provision in Santa Cruz Municipal Code Title 4 including criminal prosecution and escalating fines according to the schedule below:

- \$100 for the second violation.
- \$200 for the third violation.
- \$500 for the fourth violation and any subsequent violations.

How can I learn more about the ordinance?

You can learn more about the ordinance on the City’s [Decarbonization](#) webpage which contains the full text of the ordinance, and other informative materials such as presentations from the community engagement process.

How can I share my feedback about the ordinance?

The first hearing for the proposed ordinance is on the agenda for the June 11, 2024 City Council meeting which will be held in Council Chambers located at 809 Center Street

Santa Cruz, Ca. 95060. Interested parties can provide their feedback when the City Council discusses the ordinance.