

Compliments of the

## Wall Township

### Environmental Advisory Committee

Township of Wall  
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The Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) estimates that there were nearly 4,000 reported cases of injuries caused by leaf blowers, mulches, and grinders that were treated in hospital in the United States in 2013.

The number of actual injuries caused by leaf blowers is likely to be quite higher than this, as the data from the CPSC reporting system only looked at those injuries which resulted in medical treatment at one of 100 participating hospitals, and minor injuries were likely treated at home or another medical treatment facility not included in the reporting data.

Do not blow leaves or grass clippings into the roadway. It is technically littering, which is illegal. It also clogs storm drains, leading to flooding, and sends fertilizers, via the grass clippings, into waterways.

Public Works picks up leaves three times a year. There is a Spring Leaf pickup in April. During the Fall, the leaves are collected in November and December. Please place leaves at curbside in a neat and orderly fashion and follow your neighborhood collection dates.

If there is a violation regarding leaf blowers, call the Code Enforcement Officer or the Police Department to enforce Wall Township's noise ordinance



**Resources:**  
Everything You Need to Know About Leaf Bowers  
<https://www.safety.com/everything-you-need-to-know-about-leaf-blowers/>  
<http://wmnorthwest.com/federalway/pdf/stormdrains.pdf>

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### Leaf Blower Health Hazards



### Education and Safety Information

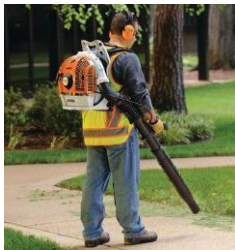
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## Leaf Blowers

The Wall Township Environmental Advisory Committee opposes the adoption of an ordinance against Leaf Blowers. The Township has a noise ordinance to handle high noise complaints. The WTEAC also believes residents have a right to hire leaf blower contractors and contractors have a right to provide their business services. The WTEAC is providing educational tips to help residents become aware of the hazards of leaf blowers, its high noise level, and additionally to provide suggestions for alternative methods.



Leaf blowers are powerful and are sometimes strapped in a pack to a worker's back. These blowers plow through leaves, grass clippings, debris and light snow, making it possible for a landscaper to quickly clear a property. There are various models of Leaf Blowers. Consider the health hazards before hiring a contractor or doing it yourself. Consider using rakes or brooms for cleaning up rather than leaf blowers.

Leaf blowers are known to generate large amounts of airborne dust, which can result in lung injury. If using a leaf blower within 50 feet, consider wearing hearing, eye, and breathing protection for smoke inhalation.

### Safety tips:

- To control exposure to nuisance dusts, wear a dust mask.
- To prevent eye injuries, wear safety goggles.
- To prevent potential hearing loss, use ear plugs or noise canceling headphones. In a 2017 Center for Disease Control and Prevention report, it lists leaf blowers as a common noise that can contribute to permanent hearing loss.

- To prevent lung injury, do not use a leaf blower to clean up gravel or gravel dust, construction dirt, plaster dust, cement and concrete dust, garden topsoil, or any other dust that could contain crystalline silica or hazardous materials.
- To prevent injuries to bystanders, make sure that no one is within 50 feet of the blower while it is operating.
- Tie back any long hair and remove loose clothing or jewelry.
- Reduce the amount of dust generated by using nozzle extensions and by holding the leaf blower at the height that generates the least dust.

Many communities are passing regulations limiting the disposal of landscape wastes in landfills. A common practice by professional landscapers is to simply blow plant debris off the property and into the street. Vehicular traffic then blows this material on neighboring landscapes or back onto the freshly blown site. Material is rarely moved into a pile where it can be collected and taken to a compost pile for proper recycling.

Another hidden cost of leaf blowers is that they deprive flowers, shrubs, and trees of life-giving mulch. Without this natural blanket, erosion, water evaporation and the spread of disease all become problems.

Mulch, when not blown away, creates a favorable growing environment for plants and beneficial organisms both above and below ground while adding nutrients to the plants root zone. When mulch is removed to the compost and renewed annually many soil borne diseases are kept to a minimum.

Blowers frequently use non-renewable fossil fuels that create air pollution

Reference:

<http://www.nonoise.org/quietnet/cqs/leafblow.htm>

The American Lung Association recommends that a passerby avoid blowers if possible, especially if they suffer from respiratory problems. This includes children who can be more vulnerable.

Dangerous chemicals – Leaf blowers spread dust, dirt, animal droppings, herbicides, and pesticides into your air, over your cars and into the windows of your home.

### Alternatives

1. Use Rakes and Brooms to clean up leaves as it is still the most economical method.



2. Leaf vacuum – After sucking up the leaves, then either compost them or put them out for community pick up. While not completely silent, electric engines can be 50-70% quieter than gas powered leaf blowers and generate no direct source air pollution.
3. Mulching mower –. Mow over the leaves on your lawn. If you mulch the leaves finely, you can scatter them under bushes and trees for a winter groundcover. Otherwise, compost them or bag them for pick up.
4. Lawn Sweeper –It uses height-adjustable brushes to sweep leaves up into an attached collection bag. If you think you absolutely must use a leaf blower, make it electric.
5. Electric leaf blowers are still noisy but won't pollute the air the way a gas-powered mower does. Limit their use to clearing out gutters and hard-to-reach areas under bushes.

Whatever you do, don't burn the leaves. They create polluting smoke that can wreck air quality and threaten people with asthma or other respiratory diseases.

Reference: 5 Greener Alternatives to Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers