



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE LEAF BLOWER REGULATIONS

Notice: Pursuant to Cambridge Municipal Code 8.16.081.4, the following Regulations were adopted on 9/12/16 by Public Works Commissioner Owen O’Riordan and License Commission Chair Nicole Murati Ferrer. These are effective immediately and are subject to changes and amendments.

- (1) All provisions of Cambridge Municipal Code (the “Code”), Noise Control, Chapter 8.16 are incorporated herein and made a part hereof.
- (2) Unless explicitly exempted, all persons and municipal contractors or commercial leaf blower operators and their employees must comply with all provisions of Chapter 8.16 of the Code, including but not limited to 8.16.081 (“Ordinance”), and the Regulations (the “Regulations”) herein.
- (3) Only leaf blowers that are portable, handheld or back style powered by fuel or electricity are regulated by the Ordinance.
- (4) Commercial leaf blower operators, as defined by the Ordinance, must be permitted by the License Commission prior to operating, or allowing any of its employees to operate, leaf blowers in Cambridge.
 - (a) The permit must be applied for annually.
 - (b) The permit is subject to conditions, revocation, suspension and/or fines.
- (5) Any company or person, including the property owner, who violates, or allows any other to violate, the provisions of the Code or these Regulations, may be subject to fines of \$300.00 per violation.
- (6) All leaf blowers must meet current EPA emissions standards and cannot emit noise greater than 65 decibels, as rated by the manufacturer.
- (7) The user of a leaf blower must make all reasonable efforts to use it at the speed/throttle which emits the least sound and is least disturbing but can still accomplish the work to be performed.
- (8) Only one leaf blower can be used in parcels of 10,000 square feet or smaller.
- (9) Multiple leaf blowers can be used on parcels of land larger than 10,000 square feet so long as the leaf blowers are at least 10,000 square feet apart from each other.
- (10) When employees of the same commercial leaf blower operator are servicing adjacent parcels, the employees must not operate them simultaneously unless they are at least 10,000 square feet apart from each other.
- (11) Leaf blowers can only be used March 15 – June 15 and September 15 – December 31. The proper hours of operation during these periods are: Mondays through Fridays, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.; Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.; Indigenous Peoples’ Day, 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.; and Veterans’ Day, 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. They cannot be operated on Sundays or any other legal holiday. This Regulation does not apply to municipal employees or municipal contractors working at Danehy Park, Fresh Pond Reservation, Fresh Pond Golf Course, Municipal Cemetery, Old Burial Ground, or after an emergency after a storm.
- (12) Commercial leaf blower operators must submit their employees to any training offered by the License Commission or submit an affidavit attesting they have trained all employees on the provisions of the Code and the Regulations.

- (13) Leaf blowers cannot be pointed at persons or animals. There must be a distance of at least fifty (50) feet between the user and any person or animal.
- (14) It is prohibited to blow towards open windows or doors. When possible, leaf blowers are not to be used within 10 feet of windows or doors.
- (15) Private citizens/individuals and commercial leaf blower operators are prohibited from blowing debris onto adjacent property, the street, catch basins, gutters, vehicles, people or animals.
- (16) Municipal employees or Municipal contractors may blow leaves, dust, dirt, grass clippings, cuttings and trimming from trees and shrubs on a municipal street or sidewalk for collection and pick-up, during municipal street and sidewalk sweeping and cleaning operations.
- (17) The leaf blower operator should use the longest possible nozzle for the equipment at maximum extension and orient the nozzle to reduce the sound.
- (18) The leaf blower equipment must be checked regularly to ensure proper operation and compliant sound emissions.
- (19) When feasible, prior to using a leaf blower, the operator must spray dusty areas with water.
- (20) Leaf blowers may never be used for construction dust, plaster dust or dry garden topsoil.
- (21) Leaf blowers may never be used to move large mounds of debris. Rakes and brooms should be used whenever possible and always when loosening heavier debris.
- (22) Employees must use ear protection while operating a leaf blower. The ear protection must be provided by the employer at no cost to the employee.
- (23) Leaf blower operators should use respiratory protection while operating the leaf blower. Any employee who requests respiratory protection from their employer, must be provided one at no cost to the employee.
- (24) Leaf blower operators should use eye protection gear while operating the blower. Any employee who requests such gear from their employer, must be provided one at no cost to the employee.
- (25) Commercial leaf blower operators and municipal contractors must provide each employee with a copy of the Regulations.

The Commissioners for the Public Works Department and License Commission thank you for your compliance with the Code and these Regulations. We trust that you will ensure all employees are properly trained, provided protection gear and informed that that responsible use of a leaf blower includes using common sense. If there are any complaints or violations, please report them immediately to the City of Cambridge through Commonwealth Connect, via email at License@cambridgema.gov or by phone at (617) 349-6149.