



**CITY OF CORONADO  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES  
INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**TO: MARK OCHENDUSZKO, CITY MANAGER**

**FROM: SCOTT W. HUTH, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

**DATE: JUNE 15, 2004**

**SUBJECT: SUMMARY - 'A REPORT TO THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE ON THE POTENTIAL HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF LEAF BLOWERS'**

**IMPACTS OF LEAF BLOWERS**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a summary for Council's review of the February 2000 'Potential Health and Environmental Impacts of Leaf Blowers' report referenced in Ms. Sheila Luiken's petition to ban the use of leaf blowers in the City of Coronado.

The study itself was performed under the auspices of the California Environmental Protection Agency, Air Resources Board, using studies already existing at the time of the report (February of 2000). No new studies were performed. As the Executive Summary states: *For all hazards [exhaust emissions, fugitive dust, and noise], there have been no dose-response studies related to emissions from leaf blowers, we do not know how many people are affected by those emissions, and no studies were located that address potential health impacts from leaf blowers.*

Using what data was available to them, ARB staff concluded the following regarding the three issues of concern:

**Exhaust Emissions**

A

- *Exhaust emissions from leaf blowers are consistent with the exhaust emissions of other, similar off-road equipment powered by small two-stroke, engines, such as string trimmers, (page 3)*

- *Exhaust standards already in place have reduced exhaust emissions from the engines used on leaf blowers, and manufacturers have significantly reduced CO emissions further than required by the standards, (page 5)*
- *Among other features of the small off-road engine regulations is a requirement that production engines be tested to ensure compliance. Examination of the certification data confirms that manufacturers have been complying with the emissions regulations; in fact, engines that have been identified as being used in blowers tend to emit hydrocarbons at levels that are 10 to 40 percent below the existing limits, (page 15)*

#### Fugitive Dust

- *Banning or restricting the use of leaf blowers would reduce fugitive dust emissions, but there are no data on fugitive dust emissions from alternatives, such as vacuums, brooms, and rakes, (page 6)*
- *No data on the amount and size distributions of resuspended dust from leaf blower activities have been collected, (page 17)*
- *There are no explicit federal, state or local regulations governing leaf blower fugitive dust emissions, (page 24)*

#### Noise

- *The likelihood of a bystander exposed to leaf blower noise on an irregular basis experiencing hearing loss is low. (54)*

Nevertheless, ARB staff concluded that the use of leaf blowers has a significant impact on susceptible individuals within a community, so much so that *...local California cities and counties have been very active in regulating and enforcing noise standards. About twenty cities have banned the use of gasoline-powered, or gasoline- and electric-powered leaf blowers, from use within their city limits. Including the recent Los Angeles ban on use within 500 ft of residences, about 13% of Californians live in cities that ban the use of leaf blowers, and six of the ten largest California cities have ordinances that restrict or ban leaf blowers. All together, about one hundred California cities have ordinances that restrict either leaf blowers specifically or all gardening equipment generally, including the cities with bans on leaf blower use.*

*Restrictions ... fall into four basic categories:*

*Time of day/day of week (hours of use restricted)*

*Noise levels (noise levels recorded at a specified distance from the operator)*

*Specific areas (distance restrictions in residential areas)*

*Educational (educating the operator to change operator behavior) (page 32)*

The ARB staff's final recommendation, however, after reviewing available research ... *without a more complete analysis of potential health impacts, costs and benefits of leaf blower use, and potential health impacts of alternatives, such a recommendation [the institution of a ban or restriction on the use of leaf blowers] is not warranted. (page56)*

As mentioned in the report, a number of California cities and communities have instituted a ban or otherwise restricted the use of leaf blowers, and this is certainly an option for Coronado to consider. As mentioned in the memorandum to the City Manager of March 26, 2004, there are significant cost impacts should leaf blowers be banned within City limits. Estimated additional costs to City operations are approximately \$60,000 per year; there are no estimates of the additional costs to private landscape maintenance companies, their customers, and private individuals. Additionally, the cost of enforcing a ban or other restrictions on the use of leaf blowers would have to be balanced against the potential benefit to the community.

Should Council wish to pursue this further, the next step might be to develop more specific cost impacts and to hold a public workshop to gain an understanding of the entire community's opinion.

### California Cities with Some Form of Restrictions on the Use of Leaf Blowers

City	Partial Ban	Decibel Maximum	Allowable Hours/Days	Notes
Arcata <sup>(3)</sup>	Restricted Locations			Use of leaf blowers prohibited around City Hall, County libraries, on the Plaza and all businesses facing the Plaza.
Atherton <sup>(3)</sup>	Restricted Times		8 am to 6 pm M-F 10 am to 5 pm Sat 10 am to 3 pm Sun	
Berkeley <sup>(3)</sup>	Restricted Times		7 am to 10 pm M-F 9 am to 8 pm S-S	
Burlingame <sup>(1)(2)</sup>	Restricted Times	65dBA	9 am to 5 pm M-S 12 pm to 4 pm Sun	City employees are restricted to: 8 am to 9 am M-S at 8 am to 12 noon, Sundays and holidays
Carmel by the Sea <sup>(1)</sup>	Restricted Times and Equipment		7 am to 9 pm	Electric leaf blowers only, no gas-powered
Claremont <sup>(1)(2)</sup>	Restricted Times and Equipment		No more than 15 minutes in any one hour	Electric leaf blowers only. City employees are prohibited from using leaf blowers.
Coronado	Restricted Times		7 am to 7 pm	
Dana Point <sup>(2)</sup>	Restricted Times	65dBA	9 am to 5 pm M-Sat	Use prohibited on legal holidays
Danville <sup>(3)</sup>	Restricted Times		8 am to 10 pm	
Davis <sup>(3)</sup>	Restricted Times	70dBA	7 am to 7 pm M-F 9 am to 5 pm S-S	No commercial use on Sundays. Each user to stay 50' away from any other user

(1) Bureau of Development Services, 'Summary of Cities with Leaf Blower Ordinances', November 15, 2002

(2) League of California Cities website, listing of cities with ordinances regarding leaf blowers

(3) League of California Cities "Leaf Blower Regulations 2001"

### California Cities with Some Form of Restrictions on the Use of Leaf Blowers (con't)

City	Full/Partial Ban	Decibel Maximum	Allowable Hours/Days	Notes
Foster City <sup>(3)</sup>	Restricted Times		8 am to 5 pm M-F 9 am to 5 pm Sat Not on Sundays or holidays in residential	Requires blower nozzle extension in residential zone
Irvine <sup>(1)(3)</sup>	Restricted Times	70dBA	8 am to 5 pm M-F 9 am to 5 pm Sat Not on Sunday	City certifies blowers and operators.
La Canada Flintridge <sup>(3)</sup>	Restricted Times	65dBA	7 am to 9 pm	
Los Angeles <sup>(1)</sup>	Restricted Use			Not in residential areas, only commercial
Menio Park <sup>(3)</sup>	Restricted Times	65dBA	8 am to 5 pm M-F 11 am to 3 pm Sat Not on Sundays or holidays	
Palo Alto <sup>(1)(3)</sup>	Restricted Times	65dBA	9 am to 5 pm M-S 10 am to 4 pm Sun and holidays	Residential ban not to be implemented until 2005. Licensed operators.
Pasadena <sup>(2)</sup>	Restricted Times	65dBA	8 am to 5 pm M-F 9 am to 5 pm Sat Not on Sundays	Can operate one per parcel only. 15 minutes max per hour on lots Vi acre or less, 30 minutes max per hour on lots > 1/2 acre
Pismo Beach <sup>(3)</sup>	Restricted Times		7 am to 10 pm	
Redondo Beach <sup>(2)</sup>	Restricted Times		8 am to 8 pm M-F 9 am to 6 pm S-S	
Sacramento <sup>(1)(2)(3)</sup>	Restricted Times	65dBA	9 am to 6 pm M-Sat 10 am to 4 pm Sun	No sale of gas-powered leaf blowers > 65 dBA

<sup>(1)</sup> Bureau of Development Services, 'Summary of Cities with Leaf Blower Ordinances', November 15, 2002

<sup>(2)</sup> League of California Cities website, listing of cities with ordinances regarding leaf blowers

<sup>(3)</sup> League of California Cities 'Leaf Blower Regulations 2001'

**California Cities with Some Form of Restrictions on the Use of Leaf Blowers (con't)**

City	Full/Partial Ban	Decibel Maximum	Allowable Hours/Days	Notes
San Anselmo <sup>(3)</sup>	Restricted Times		1 pm to 4 pm, M, Th, Sat	No longer than 30 minutes per property
San Diego <sup>(1)</sup>	Restricted Times	<b>65dBA</b>	8 am to 7 pm M-F 9 am to 5 pm S-S and holidays	
Sunnyvale <sup>(1)</sup>	Restricted Times	<b>65dBA</b>	8 am to 8 pm	

<sup>(1)</sup> Bureau of Development Services, 'Summary of Cities with Leaf Blower Ordinances', November 15, 2002

<sup>(2)</sup> League of California Cities website, listing of cities with ordinances regarding leaf blowers

<sup>(3)</sup> League of California Cities 'Leaf Blower Regulations 2001

## California Cities Banning the Use of Leaf Blowers

City	Ban on Use
Belvedere <sup>(1)</sup>	Full ban on all use
Beverly Hills <sup>(1)(3)</sup>	Full ban on all use
Carmel by the Sea <sup>(1)</sup>	Full ban on gas-powered blowers
Claremont <sup>(1)(2)(3)</sup>	Full ban on gas-powered blowers
Del Mar <sup>(1)(3)</sup>	Full ban on all use
Hermosa Beach <sup>(1)</sup>	Full ban on all use
Laguna Beach <sup>(2)</sup>	Full ban on all use
LosAltos <sup>(1)(3)</sup>	Full ban on all use
MillValley <sup>(1)</sup>	Full ban on all use
Santa Barbara <sup>(1)</sup>	Full ban on all use
Santa Monica <sup>(2)</sup>	Full ban on all use
Tiburon <sup>(1)</sup>	Full ban on residential use

(1) Bureau of Development Services, 'Summary of Cities with Leaf Blower Ordinances', November 15, 2002

(2) League of California Cities website, listing of cities with ordinances regarding leaf blowers

(3) League of California Cities 'Leaf Blower Regulations 2001'

**Survey of Cities that have Banned Leaf Blowers**

City & Contact	Ban on Use	How Enforced?	What is the enforcement?	How is it going?
Belvedere Nancy, Sec. to Sprndnt of PW 415.435.3838	Full ban on gas powered	Primarily complaint based.	Enforced by P.D. via City Ordinance 8.10.010. PD issues citations.	Passive enforcement. After complaint received PD follows up on it, as their resources permit.
Beverly Hills PW 310.285.2467 Bart Swanson bswanson@beverlyhill s.org	Full ban on gas powered.	Mostly complaint-based but also field-observation based. When a complaint is received, the property owner is mailed a form letter with a flyer in English and Spanish attached that they can give to their gardener. Of the complaintants, 80% are never heard from again. The remaining 20% require the Code Enforcement staff to go out at same time and day of the following week and try to catch the gardeners in the act. Then, they can give a Notice of Violation.	The P.D. initiates a Field Investigation to keep track of offenders in their data base, and to verify that the offender has received a warning. The first offense gets an Administrative Notice of Violation. Subsequent offense gets a fine. Usually the violators don't have a business license so Police require them to get one.	An enforcement nightmare, especially if the surrounding cities don't have similar ordinances. The City of B.H. has 6 code enforcement officers. They handle 20 complaints per month, of which an average of 1 results in an infraction. A major problem is that they ban gas- powered blowers but they don't ban gas- powered edgers or gas-powered lawn mowers, which make as much noise. 94% of the revenue from fines goes to the court system to pay for reimbursement of costs, so the city doesn't make any money from these citations to recover the costs of enforcement.



**Survey of Cities that have Banned Leaf Blowers (con't)**

City & Contact	Ban on Use	How Enforced?	What is the enforcement?	How is it going?
Carmel by the Sea PW 831.624.3543 Population 5,000	Full ban on gas-powered blowers	Both complaint-based and field observation based. P.D. enforces. There is no Code Enforcement Officer in the city.	The P.D. give a warning. Subsequent violations get a citation.	Staff have found it easy to regulate. Most all gardeners know about it, because they are such a small city.
Claremont Comm.Improv.Office 909.399.5467 Susan Schultz sschultz(@ci.claremont .ca.us	Full ban on gas-powered blowers	Mostly complaint-based but also field-observation based. Citations (mostly to gardeners). Contractors have to use electric powered vacuums or blowers.	Enforced by Community Improvement Officer and City P.D, If it's their 1 <sup>st</sup> offense, and if they don't have a business license, it's a "fix it" ticket. The offender has to get a business license and then the citation is waived. If they have a business license, then it is assumed they knew about the law and they get the following fines plus the expense of paying the court fees: 1 <sup>st</sup> offense \$100, 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense \$200 and 3 <sup>rd</sup> offense and every offense thereafter, within a 12 month period, is \$500.	Since 1991, have had a ban on gas-powered leaf blowers. The larger gardening businesses frequently continue to use gas blowers and simply consider the fines part of the cost of doing business. Some gardeners get around the law by using electric blowers powered by a portable generator which is just as noisy as a gas blower. It is a very controversial issue. Some members of the City Council think the ban on gas blowers may need to be reconsidered because "people have to be able to earn a living." However, the law still stands. Their Community Improvement Office has PC832 citation authority similar to the Del Mar Code Enforcement Officer. She is authorized to carry a badge and issue citations, but does not carry a gun. When a complaint is received over the phone a note is made of the day and time. The code enforcement office tries to patrol that area at the same time the following week in order to catch the offender in the act.

**Survey of Cities that have Banned Leaf Blowers (con't)**

City & Contact	Ban on Use	How Enforced?	What is the enforcement?	How is it going?
<p>Del Mar Mike Emerson (858)755-9313 x24 memerson(2@delmar.ca.us</p> <p>or www.delmar.ca.us</p> <p>or PW 858.755.3294</p>	Full ban on all use	Both, complaint-based and field staff observations.	Enforced by Code Enforcement Officer. Illegal to use blowers; ok to use vacuums. Citation Based Enforcement 1 <sup>st</sup> offense \$100, 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense \$200-5250, 3 <sup>rd</sup> offense \$500 Code Enforcement Officer took peace officer training (40 hours) at Mira Mar College and is authorized to carry a badge and issue citations, but does not carry a gun.	An "enforcement nightmare" per Code Enforcement Officer. Offenders are hard to catch. Most laborers use the blower at the end of the job (at the last five minutes). Then, they are gone. Or, they use it in the back yard so they are difficult to see. A lot of workers don't have ID, and don't cooperate.
<p>Hermosa Beach PW 310.318.0214 Superintendent Mike Flaherty Population 18,000 1 square mile</p>	Full ban on all use	Have had some kind of ban of leaf blowers for 20 years. The enforcement has been primarily complaint based.	Originally enforced, for 16 years, by the P.D. on a very reactive basis as resources allowed. Few citations were ever written. In the last four years the City hired a Code Enforcement officer. Still very few tickets have been written: possibly 12 in the last 4 years total.	Expensive to truly enforce. The only organization truly enforcing this ordinance is the Public Works department because they prohibit leaf blowers in their contracts with their subs. However, it has cost them tens of thousands of additional dollars in additional charges from the contractors. If another city were to start this program, Mike Flaherty recommends a strong education and outreach effort in the beginning. It is especially important to reach out to the nurserymen's association or any professional organization.

**Survey of Cities that have Banned Leaf Blowers (con'f)**

City & Contact	Ban on Use	How Enforced?	What is the enforcement?	How is it going?
Laguna Beach Leani Shore 949.497.0325 PW 949.497.0706	Full ban on all use			LWTC w/ Leani Shore? 7/19/04 and 7/21/04 (949)497-0325
Los Altos T/W Paul Ray Code Enforcement (he was Tiburon's contact) PW 650.947.2785 LWTC w/ Brian McCarthy 7/19/04 3:40 650. 947.2879	Full ban on gas powered leaf blower		Gas Powered Leaf Blower Ordinance fine = \$25	Difficult to justify to people cause gas powered lawnmowers, weed whackers, chainsaws and other noisy, air polluting powered tools are allowed. Some gardeners run their electric leaf blower off a gas powered portable generator & are within the law.
Mill Valley City Clerk, Mary Herr, (415)388-4033 (PW 415.388.4033) www.citvofmillvall.o	Full ban on gas powered only	Noise ordinance prohibits gas-powered leaf blowers but allows electric blowers. Misdemeanor offense with fines up to \$500.	Enforced by Police Dept Municipal Code Title 7 Health & Sanitation Code Ch. 7.16.090. Complaint-based enforcement.	Ordinance exists but it is, effectively, not enforced. Police respond only to complaints. Most of the time, by the time they get to the location, the violator is gone. If the violator is there, the violator was unaware of an ordinance against gas blowers. Current ordinance went into effect in 2001, but that's an update of an ordinance that went into effect in the 90's.
Santa Barbara Re to Deputy Chief Rich Glaus 805.897.2390 PW 805.564.5377 re me to Env.Programs Richard S-rizio (sp?)	Full ban on all use???			

**Survey of Cities that have Banned Leaf Blowers (con't)**

City & Contact	Ban on Use	How Enforced?	What is the enforcement?	How is it going?
Santa Monica Police Dept. 310.458.8495 City Hall on Call 310.458.8999x8 (leaf blowers) Environ Jnfo 310.458.2213 Parks 310.458.8974	Full ban on all use	Muni Code 4.08.270A Complaint-based	Enforced by P.D. An Infraction punishable by a Fine not exceeding \$250; or a Misd. Not exceeding \$1,000 or 6 months in jail or both a fine and imprisonment.	Complaint received. Usually offender gone by the time the police get there. Effectively, not enforced.
Tiburon PW Dir Pat Echols 415.435.7388 Asst Suzanne 415.435.7354	Full ban on gas powered only.	Muni Code Chapter 30: "Town of Tiburon Leaf Blowers and Hedge Trimmers Ordinance"	Enforced by P.D.	City staff researched for a year before Council adopted an ordinance. City has met w/ very little resistance, psbly due to concerted education & outreach effort @ beginning of implementation. Have a tri-fold brochure of "Frequently Asked Questions" in English & Spanish. Had a grace period of 2 months. Had article in local paper explaining etc.

### Cities with Unique Leaf Blower Histories

City & Contact	Ban on Use	How Enforced?	What is the enforcement?	How is it going?
Los Angeles	Residential ban on gas powered only. Anyone there using a gas-powered leaf blower within 500 feet of a neighboring residence is subject to a fine of \$270.	Street Use Inspectors are classified as "Public Officers" pursuant to Section 836.5 of the Penal Code of the State of CA. This classification grants inspectors the authority to issue "personal service" citations (Notices To Appear) and to effect misdemeanor arrests for violations under their jurisdiction. Undermost circumstances, compliance is obtained through the issuance of a "Notices to Abate Nuisance" and through the Administrative/City Attorney Hearing process. Fine is \$270.	Enforced by Bureau of Street Services through its' Street Use Inspection Division. Street use Inspectors are classified as "Public Officers".	Very controversial. 1997 after an 11 year battle, gas powered blowers banned within 500 feet of residences; ordinance remains controversial after passage, and is revised twice. 1998 Ban fully implemented February 13. After intense lobbying from union, SB 1651 introduced by CA State Senator Richard Polance that would prohibit CA cities from banning leaf blowers. Los Angeles Superior Court judge upholds City's ban regardless.
Palo Alto Mark Venebal, P.D. 650.329.2449 Sarg. Carol Baldwin 650.329.2449 Traffic Div: 650.329.2406 PW 650.329.2325 <a href="mailto:pwd@cityofpaloalto.org">pwd@cityofpaloalto.org</a>	Time restrictions apply.		Enforced by P.D.	Aggressive programs in place. Leaf blower license required. To get the license have to do the following: 1) take a blower etiquette class; 2) pass a written test; 3) carry leaf blower license at all times and; 4) buy low-noise equipment. Have to have serial number on equipment that proves your license is current.

**Use of Leaf Blowers Compared to Other Options**  
**Time and Motion Study**  
**by City Parks Staff**  
**July 2004**

1. **Spreckels Park:** Time to clean park perimeter (sidewalks along Sixth Street, C Avenue, Seventh Street, Orange Avenue)
  - a. **Broom:** use corn broom; make piles of debris; pick up debris 80 minutes  
92.5% reduction in time using leaf blower
  - b. **Vacuum:** use of vacuum 24 minutes  
75% reduction in time using leaf blower
  - c. **Blower:** use of blower (at above idle speed) 6 minutes
  
2. **Police Dept** (perimeter of building including Orange Avenue, Seventh Street and back parking lot in alley)
  - a. **Broom:** use corn broom 1.5-2 hours  
91% to 93% reduction in time using leaf blower (90-120 min)
  - b. **Vacuum/Blower:** use of vacuum & blower combo 20 minutes  
60% reduction in time using leaf blower
  - c. **Vacuum/Broom:** 35 minutes  
77% reduction in time using leaf blower
  - d. **Battery Blower:** TMC battery operated (3 wheel blower) 15 minutes  
47% reduction in time using leaf blower
  - e. **Blower:** hand-held blower 8 minutes