

Five Good Reasons to Obey Winnetka's Leaf Blower Ordinance

By King Poor

For many years now, Winnetka has had an ordinance prohibiting the use of gas-powered leaf blowers from June 1 to September 30. Unfortunately, that ordinance has often been ignored. But that can change. There are at least five good reasons to obey our ordinance. And if we as a village make an effort to obey it, then this summer will be different—far quieter and with cleaner air for all.

And those five reasons? Here they are:

Reason One: It's the Law

Winnetka's blower ordinance isn't just a helpful hint or a suggestion—it's the law. And Winnetka is not alone with its law. Our neighbors along the lake—Evanston, Wilmette, Kenilworth, and Glencoe—all have similar ordinances.

A few weeks ago, the Winnetka Police Department sent letters to some 70 landscapers who do work in our village reminding them of the ordinance and asking them to comply with it and also sign a pledge that they will do so. That list will be made public. While this is a good "carrot" requesting compliance, the police department will, when needed, also write \$100 tickets for those who do not comply.

Reason Two: They Are 90 Decibels Loud

You can hear the sound of gas-powered leaf blowers from blocks away. You may even hear multiple blowers running at the same time from all directions in your neighborhood. Standing near a typical gas-powered leaf blower subjects someone to around 90 decibels of sound. Noise at that level disrupts daily life in a variety of ways—especially when more people are working and studying at home.

Reason Three: They Pollute Our Air

Unlike cars, gas-powered leaf blowers do not have pollution-control devices. A number of scientific studies have confirmed these blowers emit a mix of pollutants harmful to public health. But you don't need to be a scientist to know that what is coming out of these machines can't be good. You can smell their exhaust just walking by.

Reason Four: Electric Blowers Are Available

Not using gas-powered leaf blowers doesn't mean that everyone needs to use a rake or a broom. (But there's a lot to be said for using these tools that have served humanity well for centuries.) Technology has now advanced to the point where electric blowers provide a reasonable



substitute.

Reason Five: Be a Good Neighbor

Obeying the blower law is ultimately about being a good neighbor. The noise and pollution from these blowers is not confined just to the house that is using them. They push noise and pollution directly into the yards and homes of our neighbors.

So, be a good neighbor and obey the law. And if you have a landscaper, ask them to do so too. Doing your part to reduce the noise and pollution for those who live near you makes a real difference for them and for our village as a whole.

Want to know more?

Read this compelling letter by James Fallows, and watch his short video.

Letter: <https://www.quietcleandc.com/qcdc-in-the-news/2021/5/26/civil-disobedience-and-leaf-blowers>

Video: <https://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/575800/gas-leafblowers/>

STAY UP-TO-DATE ON SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS IN
OUR COMMUNITY BY SIGNING UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER AT
GOGREENWINNETKA.ORG
JOIN US FOR ONE OF OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS
AND FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM