

TOWN OF BROOKLINE



Article 8.31

Leaf Blower Control

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SECTION 8.31.1: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The reduction of noise and emissions of particulate matter resulting from the use of leaf blowers as well as reducing the use of gasoline and oil fuels and reducing carbon emissions into the environment are public purposes of the Town, as are protecting the health, welfare and environment public purposes of the Town. Therefore, this By-law shall limit and regulate the use of leaf blowers as defined and set forth herein.

SECTION 8.31.2: DEFINITIONS

- a. "Leaf Blowers" governed by this By-law are defined as any portable powered machine used to blow leaves, dirt and other debris off lawns, sidewalks, driveways, and other horizontal surfaces.

- b. "Property Owner" as used in this By-law shall mean the legal owner of record of real property as listed by the tax assessor's records.

- c. "Property Manager" shall mean any tenant in possession or person or entity in control of real property, including, but not limited to, a condominium association.

- d. "User" means the person or entity using the Leaf Blower at the time of the violation.

SECTION 8.31.3: LIMITATIONS ON USE

- a. No Property Owner or Property Manager shall authorize or permit the operation of leaf blowers on property under their control, or on the sidewalks or ways contiguous to such property, nor shall any person operate a leaf blower, except between March 15th and May 15th and between October 1st and December 31st in each year, and except for leaf blowers powered by electricity which are exempt from this seasonal usage limitation. The provisions of this Section 3.a. shall not apply to nonresidential property owners but only with respect to parcels of land that contain at least five acres of open space.

b. No Property Owner or Property Manager shall authorize or permit the operation of leaf blowers on property under their control, or on the sidewalks or ways contiguous to such property, nor shall any person operate a leaf blower, except between the hours of 8 (eight) A.M. to 8(eight) P.M. Monday through Friday, and from 9 (nine) A.M. to 6 (six) P.M. on Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays.

c. On land parcels equal to or less than 7,500 (seven thousand five hundred) square feet in size, no Property Owner or Property Manager or User shall operate or authorize the operation of more than 2 (two) leaf blowers on such property simultaneously. This limitation shall also apply to sidewalks and roadways contiguous to such parcel.

d. No Property Owner or Manager shall authorize the operation of any leaf blower and no person shall operate a leaf blower which does not bear an affixed manufacturer's label or a label from the Town indicating the model number of the leaf blower and designating a noise level not in excess of sixty-seven (67) dBA when measured from a distance of fifty feet utilizing American National Standard Institute (ANSI) methodology on their property. Any leaf blower bearing such a manufacturer's label or Town label shall be presumed to comply with the approved ANSI Noise Level limit under this By-law. However, Leaf Blowers must be operated as per the operating instructions provided by the manufacturer. Any modifications to the equipment or label are prohibited. However, any leaf blower(s) that have been modified or damaged, as determined visually by anyone who has enforcement authority for this By-law, may be required to have the unit tested by the Town as provided for in this section, even if the unit has an affixed manufacturer's ANSI or Town label. The Controller of any leaf blower without a manufacturer's ANSI label on such equipment may obtain a label from the Town by bringing the equipment to the town's municipal vehicle service center or such other facility designated by the Town for testing. Such testing will be provided by the Town's designated person for no more than a nominal fee (which shall be non-refundable) and by appointment only at the Town's discretion. If the equipment passes, a Town label will be affixed to the equipment indicating Decibel Level. In the event that the label has been destroyed, the Town may replace it after verifying the specifications listed in the Controller's manual that it meets the requirements of this By-law.

The provisions of this Article 8.31.3 shall not apply to the use of leaf blowers by the Town, its employees or contractors while performing work for the Town.

SECTION 8.31.4: REGULATIONS

- a. The Commissioner of Public Works shall have the authority to promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of this By-law, subject to the approval of the Select Board
- b. The Commissioner of Public Works shall have the authority to waive temporarily any of the limitations on the use of Leaf Blowers set forth in this By-law in order to aid in emergency operations and clean-up associated with severe storms. In the event of issuing a temporary waiver, the Commissioner of Public Works shall post a notice prominently on the Town of Brookline's internet home page and make other good faith efforts to notify the public including, but not limited to, social media.

SECTION 8.31.5: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TOWN DEPARTMENTS

a. Departmental Actions

All Town departments and agencies shall, to the fullest extent consistent with other laws, carry out their programs in such a manner as to further the objectives of this By-law.

b. Departmental Compliance with Other Laws

All Town departments and agencies shall comply with federal and state laws and regulations to the same extent that any person is subject to such laws and regulations.

c. Town Exemption

The Department of Public Works shall be exempt for day and night time operations for routine maintenance. However, the DPW shall make every effort to reduce noise in residential areas, particularly during the limited use hours set forth in Section 8.31.3.b of this By-law.

d. Town Leaf Blower Equipment

Prior to purchasing new equipment, the Town must consider equipment with the lowest Decibel rating for the performance standard required.

SECTION 8.31.6: PERMITS FOR EXEMPTIONS FROM THIS BY-LAW

(a) The Select Board, or its designee, may grant a special permit to a Property Owner or Property Manager: (i) for any activity otherwise prohibited under the provisions of this By-law,

(ii) for an extension of time to comply with the provisions of this By-law and any abatement orders issued pursuant to it,

(iii) when it can be demonstrated that bringing a source of noise into compliance with the provisions of this By-law would create an undue hardship on a person or the community. A Property Owner or Manager ~~or~~ seeking such a permit should make a written application to the Select Board, or its designee. The Town will make reasonable efforts to notify all direct abutters prior to the date of the Select Board's meeting at which the issuance of a permit will be heard.

(b) The Select Board, or designee, may issue guidelines defining the procedures to be followed in applying for a special permit.

The following criteria and conditions shall be considered:

(1) the cost of compliance will not cause the applicant excessive financial hardship;

(2) additional noise will not have an excessive impact on neighboring citizens.

(3) the permit may require portable acoustic barriers during night use.

(4) the guidelines shall include reasonable deadlines for compliance or extension of non-compliance.

(5) the number of days a person seeking a special permit shall have to make written application after receiving notification from the Town that (s)he is in violation of the provisions of this By-law.

(6) If the Select Board, or its designee, finds that sufficient controversy exists regarding the application, a public hearing may be held. A person who claims that any special permit granted under (a) would have adverse effects may file a statement with the Select Board, or designee, to support this claim.

SECTION 8.31.7: HEARINGS ON APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL PERMITS

Resolution of controversy shall be based upon the information supplied by both sides in support of their individual claims and shall be in accordance with the procedures defined in the appropriate guidelines, if any, issued by the Select Board, or designee.

SECTION 8.31.8: ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES

a. This By-law may be enforced in accordance with Articles 10.1, 10.2 and/or 10.3 of the General By-laws by a police officer, the Building Commissioner or his/her designee, the Commissioner of Public Works or his/her designee and/or the Director of Public Health or his/her designee.

b. Violations of this By-law shall be subject to the following penalties:

1) For the first violation in each calendar year a written warning will be issued

2) For second and subsequent in each calendar year, both the Property Owner or Property Manager and the User shall be fined according to the table below:

	Property Owner or Property Manager	User, if other than Property Owner or Property Manager
First Offense	Written Warning	Written Warning
Second Offense	\$50.00	\$50.00
Third Offense	\$100.00	\$100.00
Each Subsequent Offense	\$150.00	\$150.00

3) Applicable court costs for any enforcement action taken.

SECTION 8.31.9: EFFECTIVE DATE

The provisions of this By-law shall be effective as provided in M.G.L. c. 40, s.32.