

# GAS LEAF BLOWER FACT SHEET

## Contra Costa County Climate Leaders

A project of Generation Green - a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

Find Links to Other Local Government Policy Opportunities at  
[www.cccclimateleaders.org](http://www.cccclimateleaders.org)

### WHAT?

The past few years have seen a substantial increase in the number of leaf blowers that are being used in our communities in both residential and business areas, and many cities have taken action to legislate them due to the air and noise pollution they create.

### WHY?

- According to the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the number of high emission small-engine equipment (most commonly yard and garden equipment such as mowers and blowers) surpasses passenger cars in our state! CARB will consider new standards in 2020. To learn more view their Fact Sheet [here](#).
- Using a gas leaf blower for one hour makes more emissions than driving 1,000 miles.
- The commonly used machines produce significant toxic exhaust that has been linked to asthma, heart disease, cancer and other serious ailments.
- A 2017 CDC report lists gas leaf blowers as a common noise that can contribute to hearing loss.
- Electric blowers have improved significantly the past few years and are capable of comparable work without compromising production or aesthetics.

### Comparative Air Pollution Chart

Commercial Leaf Blower Emissions Compared to Light Duty Vehicle Emissions  
 3 hp average, 50% load factor, 1999 emissions data.

	Exhaust Emissions grams/hr	Exhaust Emissions new light duty vehicle* grams/hr	Exhaust Emissions older light duty vehicle** grams/hr
Hydrocarbons	199.26	0.39	201.9
Carbon Monoxide	423.53	15.97	1310
Particulate Matter	6.43	0.13	0.78
Fugitive Dust	48.6-1031	N/A	N/A

\*New light duty vehicle represents vehicles one year old, 1999 or 2000 model year, driven for one hour at 30 mph.  
 \*\*Older light duty vehicle represents vehicles 1975 model year and older, pre-catalytic vehicle, driven for one hour at 30 mph.  
 Provided by California Air Resources Board, 2000

### Sound Level Chart

Perceived Sound Level	Sound Level	Examples	Leaf Blower Reference
PAINFULLY LOUD	160	2x10 <sup>9</sup>	OSHA limit for impulse noise
	150		
	140	2x10 <sup>8</sup>	
UNCOMFORTABLY LOUD	130		90-105 dB leaf blower at operators ear 90 dB OSHA permissible exposure limit
	120	2x10 <sup>7</sup>	
	110		
VERY LOUD	100	2x10 <sup>6</sup>	62-75 dB Leaf blower at 50 feet
	90		
	80	2x10 <sup>5</sup>	
MODERATELY LOUD	70		
	60	2x10 <sup>4</sup>	
	50		
QUIET	40	2x10 <sup>3</sup>	
	30		
	20	2x10 <sup>2</sup>	
VERY QUIET	10		
	0	2x10 <sup>1</sup>	
	BARELY AUDIBLE		

dB= decibels  
 μPa= micro Pascals  
 Provided by California Air Resources Board, 2000

### WHO?

- Nationwide over 400 communities have passed ordinances restricting leaf blowers. Two dozen California communities have banned gas leaf blowers (some have banned all blowers). To see the complete list, please [click here](#). Select your state and search for cities? Click here to see a [List of California cities with bans / restrictions](#)

Good examples of city ordinances for your city to use as best practice examples, include:

- [Palm Springs leaf blower ordinance and staff report](#)
- [City of Sonoma leaf blower ordinance](#)
- [City of Irvine blower ordinance](#)

Other resources:

- [Ted Talk, Why noise is bad for your health](#)
- [Atlantic article](#)
- [DC Ban](#) (5/10/19)

