

CITY OF VENTURA

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# NEWS RELEASE

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501 Poli Street  
Ventura, CA 93001

**For Immediate Release**  
**December 19, 2017**

City of Ventura Disaster Hotline, 805-477-3711

## **Ventura City Council Adopts Emergency Ordinance Prohibiting Use of Leaf Blowers**

On Monday December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017 the Ventura City Council voted to adopt an emergency ordinance banning the use of gas, electric, and battery powered leaf blowers in the City of Ventura. Shortly after the start of the Thomas Fire, air quality in the City of Ventura deteriorated. It has become worse as the size and intensity of the fire has increased. Weather conditions have contributed to smoke and ash becoming a potential health issue.

Public health officials have cautioned against the use of leaf blowers to clean up ash. Using leaf blowers makes fallen ash airborne. This increases the risk of the ash being inhaled by residents and animals. Due to these existing conditions and the harmful effects of ash resulting from the Thomas fire, the Ventura City Council imposed a ban on gas, electric, and battery powered leaf blowers City wide. The ordinance shall be effective immediately and will remain in effect until and through the last day of the existing emergency unless sooner terminated by action of the City Council. Any person convicted of violating the ordinance shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Ventura County Public Health officials recommend the following:

- If possible, try to AVOID direct contact with ash. If you get ash on your skin, in your eyes, or in your mouth, wash it off as soon as you can, with clean or sterile water.
- Covering clothing is recommended, when in proximity to ash. Wear gloves, long sleeved shirts, and long pants to avoid skin contact, whenever possible. Goggles are recommended. Contact with wet ash may cause chemical burns or irritation on skin. Change your shoes and clothing prior to leaving the decontamination site to avoid tracking ash into your car, home, etc.
- When exposure to dust or ash cannot be avoided, use a well fitted NIOSH certified air purifying respirator mask, which can be purchased from most hardware stores. A mask rated N95 is much more effective than unrated dust or surgical masks in blocking ash particles.
- Persons with heart or lung disease should consult their physician before using a mask during post fire cleanup.

Residents are advised to read debris removal information and information provided by Ventura County Public Health on [VenturaCountyRecovers.org](http://VenturaCountyRecovers.org).

On December 4, 2017, a fast moving active brush fire that started North of Santa Paula along Highway 150 and Bridge Road was pushed by strong east winds through the City of Ventura. There are more than 8,200 firefighters, over 1,000 engines, and fire departments from multiple states involved plus cooperating agencies and community partners. The fire is currently estimated at 271,500 acres. Over 500 structures have burned throughout the City.

This release is available on the City of Ventura website at [www.cityofventura.ca.gov###](http://www.cityofventura.ca.gov###)