



Ventura County  
Air Pollution  
Control District



June 19, 2018

**HEALTH NOTICE**  
***Termination of Recommendation Against the use of  
Leaf Blowers***

**(Ventura County, California)** -- Please be advised that the Ventura County Public Health Department and the Air Pollution Control District are **TERMINATING** their recommendation against the use of leaf blowers in Ventura County.

The leaf blower advisory was posted on December 20, 2017, to protect the public from the ash from the Thomas Fire. With the near completion of the CalRecycle debris clean-up field work, the amount of ash present in fire-affected areas has been substantially reduced. Consequently, we are now advising that the public may consider it safe to use leaf blowers again.

Fine ash may still be found outdoors and around homes in parts of the County, so members of the public are asked to continue to take precautions when performing activities which may cause this ash to become airborne.

- Ash from burned homes and other items will likely contain metals, chemicals, and potentially asbestos, items that may be considered toxic if breathed in or touched with wet skin. Ash from the Thomas Fire has not become less toxic with time.
- Inhaled ash may be irritating to the nose, throat and lungs. In order to avoid possible health problems, the following steps are recommended:
  - Wear a tight fitting N95 respirator mask, gloves, boots, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when you know that your outdoor activities will disturb ash. People with heart or lung conditions should avoid placing themselves in such situations.
  - Sweeping gently with a push broom will disturb surfaces with ash less than will a leaf blower. Ash can be bagged and put into trash cans. Hose any remaining ash lightly with water. You may allow water from cleaning to drain into landscaping. Take care to conserve water. You may also use a shop vacuum equipped with a **high-efficiency particulate filter (HEPA)** and a disposable filter bag.
  - Protect storm drains from ash by diverting the water you use away from storm drains. Ash is highly acidic; in large quantities it can be harmful to people, the environment and aquatic life.