



Inside Gardner Utilities

Official Utility News for the City of Gardner

How to Manage Fall Leaves



Trees are beautiful because of their leaves, but it is inevitable that leaves will fall. Cleaning up your yard after all the fall leaves have fallen down can be an overwhelming job. It is important to rake, blow, mulch or bag up your leaves though.

While raking their yards, many people blow or rake the fallen leaves into the street or curb line, but this poses many hazards! Leaves, grass clippings and plant prunings are a significant source of problems and pollution when allowed to wash into storm drains. Yard waste that enters the storm drain system will decrease the flow capacity and/or cause blockages, increasing the risk of street and basement flooding.

Each time it rains, water washes over our streets, driveways, and yards picking up pollutants along the way and flowing into our storm drains. This runoff may contain pollutants, such as leaves and other yard clippings, pet waste, litter, lawn chemicals, motor oils or other toxins, which can pollute our waterways, as well as clog culverts, which can lead to flooding.

Contrary to what many people think, storm drains do not lead to wastewater treatment plants. Storm drains carry untreated storm water directly into area creeks, rivers and lakes.

There's no question that you have to do something with all the leaves. Some options are:

- Spread them as a mulch around trees, shrubs and in planting beds
- Add them to your compost pile
- Use a mulching blade on your lawn mower and leave them on your lawn
- Contact your trash disposal service about having them hauled away

Upcoming Yard Waste Changes

Beginning January 1, 2012, trash haulers will be required to provide curbside recycling to all single-family homes and use volume-based pricing. In addition, Johnson County residents will no longer be able to dispose of yard waste in landfills. Instead, the following options will help you properly dispose of it:

• Conveniently Curbside

Most waste haulers plan to offer curbside yard waste collection services to their customers on a subscription basis. Yard waste will be required to be bagged and bundled appropriately for composting per instruction from your hauler.

• Backyard Compost Bin

Leaves, grass clippings and even food waste can be easily managed on-site in a backyard composting bin. Compost can be used to fertilize lawns and gardens.

• Leave it on the Lawn

Leave any grass clippings on the lawn by using a mulch mower. Not only do the grass clippings help retain moisture, but they also return up to 25% of the nitrogen needed to fertilize the soil. Leaves can also be mulched back onto the lawn with a mulching mower.

• Drop-Off

There are several locations in the area where residents can drop-off yard waste for composting. Fees apply.

Also, please remember that dumping leaves and grass clippings into storm drains and creeks is illegal and may result in enforcement action! For more information, please contact the Johnson County Environmental Department by calling 913-715-6900 or visit www.jocorecycles.org.



Electric Emergencies

Electric emergencies don't often occur, but if they do, it's important to be ready. Knowing what to do in an emergency will help you and your family live better...and safer!



Remember these tips:

- If someone is being shocked by an electrical circuit or appliance, do not touch them directly. Either turn the power off, unplug the appliance or remove the person from the electricity by using a non-conductive, dry material or items such as a leather belt, clothing, towel or rope.
- If someone is in contact with an outdoor energized power line, stay at least 20 feet away from the area and do not attempt to remove the person or power line. Immediately call 911 in an emergency.
- If you see a power line down, do not touch it, and keep at least 20 feet away from the area. Call 911 immediately.
- Keep Gardner Energy's telephone number, as well as other utilities and medical emergency numbers, readily accessible and make sure your entire household knows where this information is kept.
- Remember, you can report an electrical issue anytime, day or night, by calling **913-856-6802**.

Dangers of Night Driving

Traffic death rates are three times greater at night than during the day, yet many of us are unaware of the special hazards of night driving. Why is night driving so dangerous? One obvious answer is darkness. The primary component of a driver's reaction is vision, and night vision is severely limiting. Depth perception, color recognition, and peripheral vision are compromised when driving at night. Older drivers have even greater difficulties with night vision. As we age, we need more light to see as well as we could in our younger years.



You can minimize night driving risks by doing the following:

- Prepare your car for night driving. Clean headlights, tail lights, signal lights and windows at least once a week. You should also have a mechanic check your headlight aim twice a year.
- Don't drink and drive! Drinking and driving is a leading cause of accidents, including night driving accidents.
- Avoid smoking when driving at night. Night vision can be worsened by the effects of nicotine and carbon monoxide.
- Turn your headlights on at dusk. Lights will not help night vision in early twilight, but they'll make it easier for other drivers to see you.
- Reduce your speed while driving at night and increase your following distances. You should be able to stop inside the illuminated area.
- When your driving at night and there is another driver ahead of you, keep your headlights on low beams so you don't blind the other driver. If an oncoming vehicle doesn't lower their beams from high to low, avoid glare by watching the right edge of the road and using it as a steering guide.
- If on a long road trip that includes night driving, make frequent stops for light snacks and exercise. If you're too tired to drive, stop and get some rest.
- If you have car trouble while driving at night, pull off the road as far as possible, turn on your flashers and the dome light. Stay off the roadway and get passengers away from the area.
- Observe night driving safety as soon as the sun goes down. Twilight is one of the most difficult times to drive, because your eyes are constantly changing to adapt to the growing darkness.