



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ON OCTOBER 9, 2023

2023 LEAF VACUUM SEASON

ATHENS, TENNESSEE – October 9, 2023 – The City of Athens Public Works Department announces Leaf Vacuum Season:

Loose Leaf Collection routes will begin on Monday, October 30, 2023, at 7:00 a.m. If you would like your leaves to be collected, please rake them three to five feet from the edge of the road as soon as they fall to the ground. **DO NOT PLACE LEAVES IN THE ROAD, IN DRAINAGE DITCHES, OR ON SIDEWALKS.** Doing so creates hazards for motorists and pedestrians, and risks clogging up storm drains that could result in flooding. In areas where there are sidewalks, leaves should be placed behind the sidewalk and leaf crews will pick them up. **DO NOT PLACE LEAVES AROUND OR BEHIND OBSTACLES** such as mailboxes, trees, fences, poles, yard decorations and vehicles. Leaf piles around or behind obstacles will not be picked up by the leaf crews, as the leaf vacuum may potentially damage the obstacle. **DO NOT PLACE LEAVES ON WATER METER LIDS, SEWER CAPS, MANHOLE COVERS, OR SEWER CLEAN OUT PLUGS.** Placing leaves on utility covers may cause damage to the leaf vacuum equipment and delay service to residents.

Additionally, we do not pick up leaves on a call-in basis. Leaf crews will work in specified zones throughout the city. Once they complete a zone, they will move on to the next zone in the series. Once crews complete all zones once, they will start back at the first zone and go through all zones a second time. For information on which zone the leaf crews are currently working, or to find out your zone, visit www.athenstn.gov/publicworks for more information.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **When will leaf crews be in my area?** We do not publish specific street routes; however, residents may visit the City of Athens Public Works leaf season page for updates on where leaf vacuums are working, and to determine the zone in which you are located.

- **Why do you not publish specific routes?** It is difficult to guarantee we can stay on a set street schedule due to factors such as weather conditions and variations in amounts of leaves collected. Creating zones for pickup ensures we can provide residents a general time frame they can plan their schedule around.
- **What will happen if my leaves have not fallen?** Leaf crews make multiple passes on their route and will tentatively return in 6-8 weeks, so you will have more chances. Once the leaf crews go around the city two full times, we will advertise the third run and issue a final notice for residents to have them roadside before leaf season ends.
- **Why are crews not picking up my leaves at the same time they have in years past?** We utilize two leaf machines that differ from units used in the past, so our speed and routes will be subject to change; however, residents should experience faster and more efficient service overall. Also, they use rotating zones/routes to ensure equitable service for all residents.
- **How long will leaf vacuum season last?** Leaf vacuum season typically ends in February, depending on weather conditions. To ensure that your leaves get picked up, please have them roadside as early as possible.

Lastly, as an alternative, and for faster service, you are encouraged to bag your leaves and the Public Works Department will collect them on the regular Brush / Junk route. You can also mulch your leaves by running your lawn mower over them. This will improve your lawn by adding organic material. Another option is composting your leaves for use in flowerbeds and gardens. If you have any further questions about leaf season, please call the Athens Public Works Department at 423-744-2745.

For more information, please contact the Office of the Public Works Department at 423-744-2745.