

SAFETY ALERT

Leaf Collection Safety

Autumn brings cooler temperatures, shorter days, and colorful leaves. But those leaves will eventually fall and need to be picked up. So here are some safety tips for leaf pickup crews:

Always be aware of your surroundings. Large vehicles, traffic and restricted vision can be a potentially deadly combination. Always wear high visibility clothing to ensure that you can be seen by equipment operators and the driving public. Try to wear clothing that contrasts with the colors of the equipment being used. For example, if you're working in and around orange traffic cones you might want to wear a bright green or yellow vest to make you stand out.

Besides your high visibility clothing, other Personal Protective Equipment that you should remember to wear include: eye protection, gloves, hearing protection, slip resistant protective footwear and, depending on the weather, layered outerwear. And don't

forget your insides, stay hydrated.

If using a leaf vacuum truck or trailer, be aware that a number of workers, at least two in NJ, have been killed when they were run over by the equipment. As the driver, always make sure you can see the other workers before moving. Establish clear communications between the leaf-vac operator and the driver, preferably verbal through radio communication, and never allow workers to ride on the equipment, even for short distances. The operator and other workers should stand well clear of the equipment when it is being moved.

Be aware that leaves, especially wet leaves, can be heavy. When raking leaves or lifting bagged leaves

use proper lifting techniques to avoid back injuries. Lift with your legs and avoid repeated bending. Get help for particularly heavy or wet bags.

Autumn is a busy time for many municipal workers, so think about what you are doing and stay safe.

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