

City of Newton
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Press Release

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Fall leaves require special cleanup

As the autumn season changes to winter, Newton residents are dealing with additional yard waste: fallen leaves. Many residents compost or mulch this waste in their yards or bag it for a trip to the Harvey County Transfer Station. (Yard waste is not collected curbside.)

But far too many residents dump their leaves and other yard debris into the street, creating problems for the city's public works employees and systems.

"Leaves that have been raked into the street not only make the streets look untidy, but they wash into the stormwater system, polluting the city's waterways," said Suzanne Loomis, city engineer/director of public works. "This debris blocks storm drain inlets and hinders the flow."

During hard rains, blocked storm drains back up water into the street, causing flooding of streets and property. Drainage problems, in turn, shorten the life of pavement, creating potholes and ultimately higher maintenance costs.

In addition, an excessive amount of leaves in the streets lengthens the time it takes the City's street sweeper to complete a pass through the city. It's important to finish cleaning the streets as early in the season as possible because the sweeper is unable to operate in below-freezing temperatures.

Residents are encouraged to mulch or compost yard waste as much as possible. If citizens decide to undertake at-home composting, the city's environmental office asks that they contain the compost pile in a composting pen. Enclosing the composting material will keep it from blowing away and will speed up the process of decomposition to create nutrient-rich soil.

Realizing that the quantity of compostable material may exceed residents' needs, the next option is to drop off yard waste at the Harvey County Transfer Station. Currently, the station accepts grass clippings and leaves at no charge. This material must be free of trash, tree limbs and debris.

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