

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: May 22, 2025

PREPARED BY: Pedro Rodriguez, Code Compliance Supervisor

SUBJECT: LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE TIMEFRAMES

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide staff direction to draft the proposed amendments to Palm Desert Municipal Code (PDMC) Section 9.24.075 to establish uniform property maintenance timeframes aligned with those permitted for City-hired contractor services.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

At the April 24, 2025, City Council Study Session, the City Council directed staff to evaluate property maintenance noise regulations and return with recommendations to improve enforceability and align with public contracts and industry standards. In response, City staff has drafted proposed Ordinance amendments (Attachment 1) to streamline the ordinance, simplify compliance requirements, and establish uniform enforcement practices.

The proposed amendments clarify that the restrictions apply exclusively to the start times for using power equipment associated with property maintenance activities. This includes, but is not limited to, lawn mowers, leaf blowers, chainsaws, hedge trimmers, and edgers. Manual labor is not subject to the proposed start time restrictions.

The proposal eliminates inconsistencies between public and private sector maintenance activities by adopting uniform starting times for power equipment throughout the year. This change removes the existing seasonal schedule to promote clarity and enforceability of the ordinance.

Key Justifications and Proposed Revisions:

1. Consistency and Enforcement

- **Goal:** Establish a clear and enforceable standard citywide.
- **Recommendation:** Define property maintenance activities to include only powered equipment (blowers, lawnmowers, edgers, or similar devices).
- Manual labor not involving power equipment, such as raking, sweeping, or pruning, remains unregulated and permitted at any time.

2. Weekend Activity

- **Current Practice:** Property maintenance is currently allowed on weekends.
- **Recommendation:** Maintain existing weekend permissions; no additional restrictions are proposed.

3. Seasonal vs. Non-Seasonal Hours

- **Current Issue:** Seasonal hour distinctions result in contractor confusion and hinder enforcement.
- **Recommendation:** Eliminate seasonal concept and implement uniform, year-round start times aligned with those already permitted for City landscape contractors.

4. Exemptions

- **Recommendation:** Golf course maintenance hours will remain unchanged due to operational requirements.

Staff recommends the proposed start times outlined below, as they align with those established for City contractors and reflect standard industry practices for property maintenance operations. Standardizing these hours will promote operational consistency and improve the overall efficiency of code enforcement efforts.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

PDMC 9.24.075: Property Maintenance Activities

A. Noise sources associated with property maintenance activity, including all portable blowers, lawnmowers, edgers, or similar powered devices, shall be prohibited except during the following hours:

Monday through Sunday:	7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Government code holidays:	Not allowed

Legal Review:

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed this report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact related to this action

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Redlined Ordinance Amendments