

Laser Guidelines and Safety

The use of green lasers is permitted under the following guidelines presented below:

1. It must not exceed 5 milliwatts.
2. It must be green at a wavelength of 532nm.
3. It must not have had its infra-red blocking filter removed. Cheaper versions sometimes omit this filter - it is up to the user to ensure the filter is in place. It is recommended that a green laser pointer is purchased from a reputable supplier of astronomy equipment.
4. The recommended type of green laser is one with a switch that automatically turns off the laser when not pressed.
5. If an on/off switched laser is used it must only be switched on when your arm is raised and pointing upwards and turned off before lowering your arm. This type of laser requires extra caution by the user.
6. Lasers can be used for star pointing and as a fixed finder scope on a telescope.
7. The proper use of a laser is to point it in the general direction of the object to which attention is to be drawn; switch on and *circle* it at slow speed, with no sudden and rapid sweeping movements, and then switch off before moving on to the next object.
8. Always hold laser pointers overhead in an outstretched arm before activating the switch and release the switch before lowering the pointer.
9. When not being used keep the laser secure in a pocket and do not leave it where they public may pick it up.
10. No member of the public is allowed to use your laser.
11. A constantly illuminated laser flashing across the sky in a *light sabre* fashion is not only unsafe and unprofessional, but encourages the uninitiated club members into a belief that this is a plaything, and not a serious tool used for stargazing/observing purposes.
12. It is not permitted to allow a green laser beam to fall upon any person, any animal (including birds and other wildlife), any moving vehicle, or any aircraft in flight, remember we are very close to the airport. Neither should the laser beam fall upon private houses or other buildings, or any other stationary object including vehicles. Apart from nuisance, it is possible to encounter highly reflective objects in the process, with no control over where the reflected beam will fall, so the laser should only ever be pointed in an open-sky direction.

13. Where lasers are fitted to telescopes great care must be taken that the laser beam does not point in the direction of people. This is particularly relevant when using with the Dobsonian; the laser must only be used for alignment purposes. When picking alignment stars, they must be high in the sky so the beam is pointing skyward, well away from people.
14. Under no circumstances must a laser be pointed down into an optical tube.
15. On open evenings if cameras are being used be mindful of where you point the laser.