



UNSW Guideline	Laser Pointer Guideline
Control number	OHSxxx-2006
Linked UNSW policy	This guideline details actions and processes pursuant to the UNSW OHS Policy.
Responsible Officer	Director, Human Resources
Authorisation	Director, Human Resources
Contact Officer	Manager, OHS & WC
Effective Date	September 1, 2008
Superseded Documents	List all documents replaced by this guideline.
Review	This procedure will be reviewed in accordance with the OHS Management System Review Procedure.
File Number	TRIM Administrative File Number 011245

1. Purpose

This guideline identifies the risks involved with use and possession of laser pointers.

2. Scope

This guideline applies to all staff and students who purchase or use laser pointers as a tool in lectures, presentations or research at UNSW or as a representative of UNSW at global facilities.

4. Guideline

Laser pointers labelled Class 1 or Class 2 only shall be used at UNSW

Laser pointers are becoming more and more common in lectures and presentations to indicate an area on a projection screen, black board or similar. It is difficult for many people to believe that a device that looks like an ordinary pen light and runs on a couple of AAA batteries can be dangerous. However, within the device is a small yet powerful laser diode.

Laser pointers are commercially available as Class 1, Class 2, or Class 3 lasers. Laser ‘class’ classification gives an indication to their degree of hazard. At one end of the scale, Class 1 lasers are safe for normal viewing; eye damage is usually avoided with a Class 2 laser by the blink reaction or aversion response; and Class 3 lasers can damage an eye before it has time to blink.

A Class 3 laser pointer has the potential to cause eye injury, especially in the hands of an unaware untrained, or careless operator. The resultant injury can range from temporary flash blinding (similar to a visual after image) to a slight retinal lesion. That is why, in Australia, laser pointers shall not exceed class 2. Laser pointers should only be purchased for use at UNSW if they are labelled in accordance with AS/NZS 2211.1:2004.

Laser pointers should be handled with respect, to minimise the potential risk. The beam should always be aimed away from people.

Laser pointers of Class 3 or greater should not be used within the University of New South Wales.

NSW Legislation

1) You may own a laser pointer of less than 1 milliwatt, but you **must not** carry or use the laser pointer in a public place without a reasonable excuse. If you wish to possess and use a laser pointer over one milliwatt, you **must** obtain a prohibited weapon permit from the NSW Firearms Registry, unless you are exempt.

(Contact the NSW Firearms Registry on 1300 362 562 to request a P638 'Application for a Prohibited Weapon)

2) It is an offence in NSW to possess any laser pointer in public without a reasonable excuse. The maximum penalty for possession of any kind of laser pointer in a public place without reasonable excuse is 2 years imprisonment or a \$5500 fine, or both.

Additional information is available in the Australian Standard or NHMRC publications listed below, or from the OHS & WC Unit -Ext:52912.

5. Legal & Policy Framework

5.1 Associated Documents

Additional information is available in the Australian Standard or NHMRC publications listed below, or from the OHS & WC Unit -Ext:52912.

- Australian Standard, AS/NZS 2211.1: 2004 Safety of Laser Products, Part 1:Equipment Classification, Requirements and User's Guide (IEC 60825.1:2001, MOD).
- National Health and Medical Research Council , Code of Practice for the Safe use of lasers in the entertainment industry (1995) , Radiation Health Series No 37.
- American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists, Today, Volume 6, No 2, April 1998.
- Summary Offences and Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment (Laser Pointers) Bill 2008
- NSW Police Firearms Fact Sheet (P638) Laser Pointers (August 2008)

6. Modifications

Version	Date	Author	Approval	Sections modified	Details of amendments
1	May 2001	R G Armstrong	K Richardson	New Format	NSW Legislation update
2	August 2008	R G Armstrong	HR Director		New Guideline