**The Safe Use of Laser Pointers**



Small lasers are commonly available and some are used for presentation purposes as pointers. In the past, laser pointers were only available in red wavelengths and had output powers up to and sometimes over 5mW. Nowadays, devices are available emitting green wavelengths, where the eye is more sensitive and lower powers are all that is needed, so that laser pointers now only need to be Class 2 devices (output <1mW).

NB Class 1 laser products are normally safe.

Class 2 and Class 3R products are not hazardous under certain conditions, however they can cause harm to the eyes, particularly if the beam is stared into.

Class 3B laser pointers must not be used.

Normally the eye’s natural aversion response affords protection to short duration accidental exposure to Class 2. Class 1 or Class 2 laser pointers are the recommended choice where a laser pointer is necessary and are the only type that should now be purchased.

Laser pointers should only be used as a pointing device and securely stored when not in use. Persons who use laser pointers should ensure that they are aware of potential hazards and they should comply with the basic instructions below.

**Instructions for Use**

When operating laser pointers, users must ensure that they use them in a safe manner and do not expose themselves or others to the beam. Laser pointers are not to be modified in any way.

* Follow the manufacturer’s safety instructions
* Take care when operating the laser pointer
* Keep the ‘on’ button depressed only when necessary
* Do not keep the ‘on’ button depressed when not pointing at the screen
* Do not point at or towards the audience
* Do not point at mirrored surfaces
* Never look into the laser aperture
* Never look directly or stare into the beam/beam aperture when on
* Never allow unauthorised use, especially by children

Further guidance on laser pointers can be found at:

[http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb\_C/1195733794576](http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb%26HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1195733794576)