

Code of practise for use of Green Lasers at the observatory (or anywhere).

Laser must only be operated by the owner who is permitted to use it. It must not be given to, or used by, a third party.

Astronomer must identify target. Sometimes aircraft look like stars. If in doubt do not use. Generally waiting and watching for a minute will resolve this issue.

If there is an approaching aircraft (lights or sound), best not to use the Laser until it has departed. Sometimes aircraft can suddenly appear from behind trees or buildings.

Be particularly careful if using a Laser from inside a dome as your view of the wider sky is limited.

Best to point Laser at a specific target rather than wave around the sky.

Be aware that if pointing to objects low on the horizon, there may be people on a higher terrace who could walk past or into the beam.

A direct or indirect (reflected) Laser beam can permanently damage sight of an innocent victim.

Be careful not to shine on domes, buildings, or vehicles as bright reflections can occur.

Never use Laser inside. Reflections from windows, walls, mirrors can be dangerous.

Be careful when getting Laser from a pocket as the button can be inadvertently pressed.

Lasers should be stored in a safe place out of reach of children.

How to obtain a Green Laser for personal use.

All Lasers greater than one milliwatt require permission from the Director General of Health for importation and ownership.

Astronomy Lasers are typically 5 milliwatts to 30 milliwatts.

Nobody is exempt from the regulations. Everyone must apply to the Director General of Health for permission to import and own a Laser.

10. Are there any controls on the possession of high-power laser pointers?

Yes. The Summary Offences Act 1981 has been amended to make it an offence to be in possession of a high-power laser pointer in a public place without a reasonable excuse. (A similar provision has existed for knives for many years.)

What constitutes a 'reasonable excuse' to be in possession of a high power laser pointer will depend on the circumstances. For example:

- if you have received an authorisation to import, supply or acquire such a device from the Ministry of Health and are using it for a legitimate purpose within the scope of the authorisation, this will probably mean you have a reasonable excuse
- if you are part of a class of authorised users, such as a member of an astronomy society, and are using the device for legitimate purposes, such as pointing out stars, then this will probably mean you have a reasonable excuse.

This means you need to complete the application form and supply evidence that you are a full member of CAS. The Membership Secretary will furnish a letter on CAS letterhead on request.

You will find a copy (Microsoft Word) of the application form here.

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/environmental-health/high-power-laser-pointers>

You need to complete part A, B, D, E

Information on how to apply is on the front page of the document.

Best to gain authority from the Director General of Health before ordering a Laser from overseas. This can take up to 25 working days.