



The University of Hong Kong

SAFETY MATTERS

To: List C

Safe Use of Laser Pointers

A minor accident was reported to the Safety Office recently in which the right eye of a staff member was momentarily exposed to a laser beam emitted accidentally from a laser pointer. Our investigation shows that it was mainly due to the malfunction of the trigger button on the concerned laser pointer. As laser pointers are wildly used in the University, to prevent similar accidents in the future, I would like to draw your attention to the following safety precautions when purchasing and using laser pointers.

- (1) Use a Class-2 laser pointer if possible instead of those with a power exceeding 1 mW. When high brightness is required, use a Class-2 green pointer.
- (2) Note the safety instructions that come with the laser pointer, and make other users aware of them. More details can be found from the following link:
<https://www.icnirp.org/cms/upload/publications/ICNIRPlaserpointer.pdf>
- (3) Regularly check all laser pointers. Those lacking laser labels and/or having defective parts (including overly sensitive trigger buttons) should be repaired or replaced.
- (4) Uninstall batteries after use if possible. Place each laser pointer and its batteries in a box or envelop.
- (5) While passing a laser pointer to others, keep the outshot window in one's palm.
- (6) Never look directly into any laser beam. If the eye is accidentally exposed to a laser beam from a pointer, keep calm and seek medical attention, and report it to the Department/Unit/Office.

Please contact the Safety Office if you have any question on the matter.

Dr Edmund Hau
Director of Safety

December 2018