Policy for use of Laser Pointers

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<tr>
<th>Lead Manager</th>
<th>Head of Health Physics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Responsible Director</td>
<td>Director of Clinical Physics and Bio-engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved by</td>
<td>NHS GG&amp;C Radiation Safety Committee</td>
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</table>
CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Scope
3. Aims of the Policy
4. Laser Classification
5. Responsibilities
6. Incidents

Appendix
1. **Policy Statement**

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde recognises the potential risk to employees and visitors from use of laser pointers with high irradiances. The purpose of this policy is to enable NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde to ensure that lasers that might present any risk to the sight of individuals are not used as laser pointers.

2. **Scope**

This policy applies to all NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde employees including temporary and agency staff within NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde premises.

3. **Aims of the Policy**

The aims of this policy are:

3.1 To prevent the use lasers of class 3 or above as pointers during presentations by NHS staff or others on NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde premises.

3.2 To ensure that staff who might use lasers as pointers are aware of the laser classifications that may be regarded as safe and those that are hazardous.

4. **Laser Classification**

A system of classification has been implemented for lasers to indicate the degree of hazard and level of precautions that should be taken. The hazard to the eye in general terms from the various classes is given in the table below.

**Table: Laser Safety Classes**

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<tr>
<th>Laser Safety Class</th>
<th>Potential Eye Hazard</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td>Safe under all circumstances.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 1M</td>
<td>Safe for long term intra-beam viewing, but potential hazard with magnifiers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td>Safe for brief direct exposure. Prolonged staring may cause eye injury.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2M</td>
<td>Safe for brief exposure, but potentially hazardous when exposure occurs with magnifiers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 3R</td>
<td>Eye injury is possible from intentional intra-beam viewing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 3B</td>
<td>Direct exposure may cause serious eye injury, viewing of diffuse reflections generally safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 4</td>
<td>Hazardous to the eyes and skin under all conditions. Fire risk.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde authorise the use of any class 1, 1M, 2 or 2M visible laser as a laser pointer.

Some laser pointers may be labelled with the classification system used in the United States. This differs slightly from that included in the table, but again any Class I or II visible laser may be used as a laser pointer.

Class 3R, 3B and 4 lasers or Class III or IV lasers under the US classification are not permitted for use as laser pointers in NHS GG&C. Procurement will not purchase these Lasers for use as pointers under any circumstances.

Green lasers are not permitted, since it is known that lasers of this type which are class 3B have been used and promoted as laser pointers.

Lasers that do not have any classification label should not be used as pointers.

Class 1, 1M, 2 and 2M lasers should never be pointed directly at any individual, particularly towards the face.

Any exposure of the eyes to a laser pointer of class 3 or above, or any deliberate malicious exposure from a laser pointer of any class, should be reported to your Line Manager and logged through the Incident Reporting System.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 General Managers must ensure that:
   - An appropriate investigation and follow-up is undertaken of any laser pointer incidents in their area, and disciplinary action taken for persistent breaches of the policy.

5.2 Clinical Service Managers, Senior and Line Managers are responsible for
   - Ensuring that appropriate health and safety signage is in place within lecture theatres (see Appendix 2). Where a lecture theatre is run by a particular department, that departmental manager will be responsible for signage.
   - Ensuring that any laser purchased for use as a pointer in lectures or seminars is of class 2 or less.
   - Ensuring that appropriate post incident support is provided to staff or visitors involved in any incident associated with a laser pointer exposure of the eye.

5.3 All staff members are responsible for:
   - Ensuring that they do not use any laser of class 3 or above as a laser pointer in any presentation.
Ensuring that laser pointers are never pointed directly toward any other individual, especially towards the face.

Reporting all incidents involving any exposure of the eyes to a laser pointer of class 3 or above, or any deliberate malicious exposure from a laser pointer of any class through the Incident Reporting System.

Documenting and reporting any hazard that they identify through the DATIX system and raising any concerns they might have in respect of the use of laser pointers.

The policy will be circulated to all Directors and other relevant staff within the organisation for implementation.

The policy will also be circulated to the Head of the Environmental Safety unit within Glasgow University for information, so that it can be brought to the attention of staff lecturing on NHS GG&C premises.

6. Incidents

Any incident involving an unintended exposure of staff or visitors to a laser of class 3 or above being used as a pointer must be dealt with according to the Board Incident Management policy, which can be found in the Health and Safety section of Staffnet. It must be reported through the Datix incident recording system and to the appropriate clinical director and general manager. The Head of the Clinical Service and Clinical Director will be responsible for ensuring that an investigation is undertaken and evaluating the information obtained. If an eye injury is suspected, then a medical examination must be carried out by an ophthalmologist within 24 hours of the alleged incident.

Reports of such incidents will be dealt with through the Directorate structures and should be submitted to the Board Non-Ionising Radiation Safety Committee for consideration.

If an individual after being instructed about requirements of this policy ignores those warnings and continues to use an inappropriate laser pointer, disciplinary action may be taken against them.

7. References


Appendix 1

Health Physics contact no.: 0141 211 6760

Laser Protection Advisers:

- David Gentle  0141 211 3432  david.gentle@ggc.scot.nhs.uk
- Michael Watt  0141 211 3433  michael.watt@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

Director of Clinical Physics & Bio-Engineering:

- Professor D Keating  0141 211 2758  david.keating@ggc.scot.nhs.uk
Appendix 2

Laser pointers of Class 3 and above must not be used