

NIR-003	NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Policy for the Use of Laser Pointers	



Policy for use of Laser Pointers

Lead Manager	Head of Health Physics
Responsible Director	Director of Diagnostics
Approved by	NHS GGC Radiation Safety Committee and Health and Safety Forum
Date Approved	September 2019
Date for Review	September 2022
Version	3
Replaces previous version	2 (Jan 2012)

NIR-003	NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Policy for the Use of Laser Pointers	

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 staff 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 staff 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 ensure that only those lasers which are safe to use as laser pointers are in use 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

Laser Safety Class	Potential Eye Hazard
Class 1	Safe under all circumstances.
Class 1M	Safe for long term intra-beam viewing, but potential hazard with magnifiers.
Class 2	Safe for brief direct exposure. Prolonged staring may cause eye injury.
Class 2M	Safe for brief exposure, but potentially hazardous when exposure occurs with magnifiers.
Class 3R	Eye injury is possible from intentional intra-beam viewing.
Class 3B	Direct exposure may cause serious eye injury, viewing of diffuse reflections generally safe.
Class 4	Hazardous to the eyes and skin under all conditions. Fire risk.

NIR-003	NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Policy for the Use of Laser Pointers	

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde authorise the use of any class 1, 1M, 2 or 2M visible laser as a laser pointer. If product mislabelling is suspected or there is doubt over the classification of a laser pointer then it must not be used.

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.

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. Contact details of the NHS GGC Laser Protection Advisors is provided in Appendix 1.

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.
- An appropriate person is identified in each service (e.g. Clinical Service Manager, Senior Manager, Line Manager or other person) to be responsible for ensuring that the requirements of this policy are implemented

5.2 The person identified by the GM in 5.1 will be 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

NIR-003	NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Policy for the Use of Laser Pointers	

- Ensuring that laser pointers are never pointed directly towards any other individual, especially towards the face
- Reporting any exposure of the eyes to a prohibited laser pointer, 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 that they might have in respect of the use of laser pointers.

The policy will be circulated to all Directors and Chief Officers 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 GGC premises.

6. Incidents

Any incident involving an unintended exposure of staff or visitors to a prohibited laser being used as a pointer must be dealt with according to the NHS GGC 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 General Manager 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 reviewed through the line management structures, and should be submitted to the Board Optical 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

Health Protection Agency. Laser Pointers. 2017
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/laser-radiation-safety-advice/laser-radiation-safety-advice#laser-pointers-or-laser-pens>

NIR-003	NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Policy for the Use of Laser Pointers	

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
Shellagh Milligan	0141 211 3387	shellagh.milligan@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

APPENDIX 2



Laser pointers of
Class 3 and above
must not be use