

To: Heads of Department/Section, PVCs, SU
HSLOs and DHSOs, Faculty Managers

Urgent Action

Health and safety risk: Laser Pointer

A dangerous laser pointer has been found at the Colchester Campus. Laboratory test results classified it as a **3B laser** and it has sufficient power to cause eye injury, both by the direct beam and from reflections of the beam. It has enough power to cause flash blindness up to 250m away.

The laser pointer was purchased in Colchester. It has no CE mark, maker's identification, laser classification label or information on its power output. Further information and photographs to help you identify the pointer are given overleaf.



This pointer does not meet UK product safety standards and so has been reported to Trading Standards who are investigating.

What do you need to do?

Powerful lasers can harm you and others. Do not take unnecessary risks.

Powerful laser pointers like this are prohibited on all of the University's Campuses.

If you suspect you may have an unclassified laser pointer like the one shown in the pictures carefully remove the batteries by pointing the laser aperture down to the floor, carefully unscrewing the battery unit and taking out the batteries. At no time push the button or look into the laser aperture. Then, hand it into the Information Centre as soon as possible. If you have any of the laser pointer's packaging please hand that over as well.

HSLOs / DHSOs should inform staff and display this poster in their department/section/business unit, in locations where staff and students can see them. Please note that the University's communications team will also be including notification of this hazard in their mid-term bulletin, which will be emailed to all students.

Are all laser pointers unsafe?

No, laser pointers on sale through reputable suppliers in the UK and marked Class 1 or 2, under the current British Standard for lasers are low powered (1mW) and are generally safe to use, provided they are used with care and not deliberately stared at or shone into people's faces. Laser beams should never be pointed into anyone's eyes, either directly or via a reflective surface, as even low class lasers can cause eye damage.

For more information about laser pointers and their safe use go to:

www.essex.ac.uk/ohsas/radiation/Laser_safety.htm#Pointers

Identification of the dangerous laser pointer:



The unsafe laser pointer comes in a grey textured box



The words 'Green Laser Pointer' are on the inside.



The laser pointer is matt black with a silver control button, clip, top and edge of laser aperture. It is approximately 15 cm long and 1 cm diameter.



'★Laser Pointer★' is in italic font on the clip. There are some 2mm circular indentations here.



View inside the device.
The laser pointer is powered by 2 AAA batteries.



Image of the laser aperture.
There is small silver label with 'QC/PASSED 1' on the side of the device.