

# Health & Safety Alert

July 2015

WARWICK  
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

## Laser Pointers

### Warning



Above is a DealExtreme 5mW green laser pointer bought over the internet for £5. The user wanted it for an experiment he was going to perform with students. He thought it seemed very bright so contacted his radiation protection officer. It was found to have a power output nearly ten times higher than advertised and it emitted not only green light but also invisible infrared radiation. The purchaser thought the pointer would be relatively safe when in fact it had the potential to cause serious eye damage.

There are also a number of reports of children having their eyesight irreversibly impaired after playing with laser pointers as toys.

There is a valid case for laser pointers to be purchased if used responsibly as a teaching aid or as a research instrument; the best advice is to acquire laser pointers only from reliable / reputable sources, and red light rather than green light laser pointers are recommended for teaching presentation purposes.

Further information is available from the H&S website at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/healthsafetywellbeing/guidance/lasers/laserpointers/> or contact the University Radiation Protection Officer.

#### Useful links

[Report all incidents and near misses](#)

[Health & Safety webpages](#)

[Need advice on health & safety](#)