



Position Statement of The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada On Green Laser Pointer Usage

The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's (RASC) mission is to encourage improved understanding of astronomy for all, through education, outreach, research, publication, partnership, enjoyment, and community. The RASC advocates the safe and responsible use of green laser pointers (GLPs).

Recent reports indicate a rising trend in the illegal targeting of aircraft by people on the ground misusing consumer laser devices. This practice threatens the safety of aircrew, passengers, and people and structures under flight paths. The RASC wishes to add its voice to those of the health and safety sector, aerospace industry associations, law-enforcement agencies and government in calling for greater public awareness of the issue, for safe and responsible use of laser pointers, and for reasonable legislation to curb abuses.

Green Laser Pointers do have established legitimate applications as effective teaching aids in astronomical education and public outreach, and as adjuncts to observing if used safely. The great receptivity of the eye to the wavelength of the green laser pointer makes it a very effective instrument for pointing out features of the night sky. The public attending education sessions and star parties at science centres and observatories can experience the beam of the green laser apparently reaching right out to planets, stars, and nebulae.

The RASC, Canada's leading organization dedicated to astronomical education and public outreach, has developed a voluntary Green Laser Pointer best-practice policy to promote the safe and responsible use of GLPs in astronomy education and outreach. In keeping with the RASC's long-standing commitment to informative and safe education and public outreach, it strongly encourages everyone who uses a green laser pointer to follow the freely available guidelines at www.rasc.ca/education/other/glpuse.shtml.

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