

Maidenhead Astronomical Society

Laser pen policy

Laser pointers are useful for specific purposes; however, they are a working tool and should be handled in a careful and safe manner. They have the potential to damage eyesight and distract those engaged in crucial work, such as airline pilots. Maidenhead Astronomical Society will allow their use as a pointer during outreach events and talks providing the following guidelines are followed.

- A laser pointer should only be used after careful consideration of the local environment. This should include location, inside or outside; weather conditions; proximity of roads and airports; age range of people attending the event and proximity of houses and farms. This list is not exhaustive and all other local factors should be considered.
- The laser should always be pointed towards the sky or a screen before being activated and switched off before being lowered.
- Before activation a user should check to ensure no one is close to the direction the laser will travel. Examples include no one standing near the screen or no aircraft visible in the sky.
- Once a target has been pointed out the beam should be switched off and not traversed across the sky or room. The pointer should be moved to another part of the sky whilst deactivated and only switched on when close to the astronomical object to be highlighted.
- The laser should only be activated for the minimum amount of time needed to highlight an object.
- The pointer should remain in the possession of the operator at all times and be switched off most of the time.
- Only responsible adults approved by MAS should be allowed to use a pointer at an outreach event. Children under the age of 18 and non-approved adults should not be allowed to use a laser pen at any time during a MAS event. Any member of the public bringing their own device should be requested not to use it during one of our events and asked to leave if they are not willing to comply with this request.
- As a general rule if you are unsure about anything you wish to point the laser at then do not use it.