



**THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY**
WASHINGTON, DC

Responsible University Official:
Director, Office of Laboratory Safety
Responsible Office: Office of Laboratory
Safety
Last Revised Date: March 15, 2010

LASER SAFETY

Policy Statement

Each department that acquires or operates lasers for use in laboratories or research is responsible for reporting laser acquisition to the Office of Laboratory Safety, selecting a departmental deputy laser safety officer, mandating training for its laser operators in operational and safety practices, and for following the guidelines and requirements set forth in the university’s [Laser Safety Manual](#).

Reason for Policy

If improperly used or controlled, lasers can produce multiple injuries, including burns, blindness, and electrocution. This policy and the university’s [Laser Safety Manual](#) were developed to provide safety and training information to faculty, staff and students working with lasers, as well as to people working in close proximity to lasers.

Who is Governed by this Policy

Faculty, staff and students

Table of Contents

Policy Statement	1
Reason for Policy	1
Who is Governed by this Policy	1
Table of Contents	1
Policy	2
Definitions	3

Forms	3
Related Information	3
Contacts	3
Document History	3
Who Approved This Policy	4

Policy

This policy applies to lasers used in laboratories or research. Departments that acquire or operate such lasers are responsible for following the guidelines and procedures for laser use and safety set forth in this policy and in the [Laser Safety Manual](#). The Office of Laboratory Safety will provide a knowledgeable laser safety officer to oversee the university’s Laser Safety Program.

Reporting Acquisition of Lasers

All classes of lasers acquired by departments must be reported in writing to the Office of Laboratory Safety. The written notice shall include the manufacturer, laser class, room and building where the laser will be used, and the party responsible for the laser. This report may be made using the [Laser Safety Inventory Form](#).

Appointment of Deputy Laser Safety Officer

Each department that operates lasers must select a deputy laser safety officer (DLSO) who is responsible for the safe operation of all lasers under their control. The DLSO will be the primary contact between the Office of Laboratory Safety and the respective department. The DLSO shall be responsible for notifying the Office of Laboratory Safety within 24 hours of any accident involving a laser. Lasers involved in an accident must be taken out of service immediately. Any DLSO changes must be reported to the Office of Laboratory Safety within 24 hours.

Mandatory Training for Laser Operators

Individual users of lasers must be adequately trained and demonstrate full understanding of the safety practices outlined in the university’s [Laser Safety Manual](#), which was developed to provide safety and training information to faculty, staff and students who work with or in proximity to lasers. Equipment, information, and training for students will be administered by individual academic departments or by the Office of Laboratory Safety depending on laser class. Detailed safety guidelines and procedures are set forth on the [Office of Laboratory Safety](#) web site and in the

[Laser Safety Manual](#), and are taken from the “*Guide for the Safe Use of Lasers*” (ANSI Z136.1 – 2007), published by the American National Standards Institute.

Definitions

Laser: a device that emits electromagnetic radiation (usually in the UV, visible, or infrared spectra) in a concentrated beam that is monochromatic, spatially coherent, and has a narrow divergence.

Forms

[Acknowledgement of Laser Training](#)

[Laser Safety Inventory Form](#)

[Laser Training Presentation](#)

Related Information

“*Guide for the Safe Use of Lasers*” (ANSI Z136.1 – 2007), published by the American National Standards Institute

Contacts

Contact	Telephone	Email
Laboratory Safety	202-994-8258	labsafety@gwu.edu

Document History

- **Last Reviewed Date:** July 2, 2018
- **Last Revised Date:** March 15, 2010
- **Policy Origination Date:** November 22, 2004

Who Approved This Policy

Leo M. Chalupa, Vice President for Research

Louis H. Katz, Executive Vice President and Treasurer

Beth Nolan, Senior Vice President and General Counsel

This policy, as well as all [university policies](#), are located on the [Office of Compliance's](#) home page.