

Laser Safety

Lasers are commonly used in research and healthcare and even in offices in the form of laser pointers. Lasers can be dangerous if not used properly, and some must be registered with Temple before use.

What is a Laser Safety Officer?

The Laser Safety Officer (LSO) is a designated individual with the authority and responsibility to monitor and enforce the control of laser hazards and to effect the knowledgeable evaluation and control of laser hazards.

Do laser safety standards apply to medical and dental lasers?

Yes.

Are controls required when lasers are in use?

This is based on laser classification. The LSO will determine what controls are required.

Are there any long-term effects that can occur from using lasers?

Regular exposure to laser radiation can lead to cataracts and skin cancer, particularly in the ultraviolet wavelengths. Addressing these hazards is done as part of the LSO's evaluation.

Can I use sunglasses for laser protection?

Sunglasses are NOT laser protective eyewear. They are not rated (e.g., with Optical Density) to ensure light-attenuation protection. Most will not block enough laser light to significantly reduce hazardous exposures.

What are some non-beam hazards?

Non-beam hazards can include frostbite from cryogenic lasers, chemical exposures from dye-based lasers, and inhalation hazards from the fumes generated by cutting lasers.

What Laser Classes need to be registered?

All Class 3B and 4 lasers have to be registered with the LSO.

Fill out and submit the [Laser Registration Form](#) to do so.

Quick Take

- Contact the [LSO](#) for concerns related to laser usage and safety.
- Wear the appropriate safety eyewear when needed. Sunglasses are not considered protective eyewear.
- Be mindful of non-beam hazards when using lasers.

Helpful Links:

[Temple University Laser Safety Policy](#) • [Laser hazards: OSHA Safety and Health Topics](#) • [Laser Institute of America LIA](#)

