



SAFETY ALERT

Unenclosed Laser Cutters

October 2021

Online vendors are selling high powered lasers without adequate safety provisions. (Try googling “laser cutters.”)

Lasers capable of causing devastating eye injuries can be easily obtained despite being illegal to possess without licensing in a number of Australian jurisdictions. Warnings provided by the vendors are inadequate. “Safety” glasses supplied with the lasers seldom comply with Australian requirements and may not provide adequate protection. If you see what appears to be a laser device that is not enclosed then please contact your local Health and Safety representative without delay.

Unenclosed laser cutter. This is not OK.



Curtin University

Thanks to Curtin University and Radiation Safety Advisor Tim Finney for sharing this Safety Alert tim.finney@curtin.edu.au

Unenclosed laser head. This is not OK.

Recently an unenclosed laser cutter was discovered at an Australian university by an observant technician who, in collaboration with his safety team, promptly removed it from circulation. A student had purchased the laser cutter online and brought it to a student space.

The student was not aware of the hazard posed by the laser, not least because the online shop which sold it provides completely inadequate information on the potential hazard. The laser has a power of 5.5 watts, which is about 5000 times the maximum permissible exposure level. It is capable of causing devastating retinal injuries.

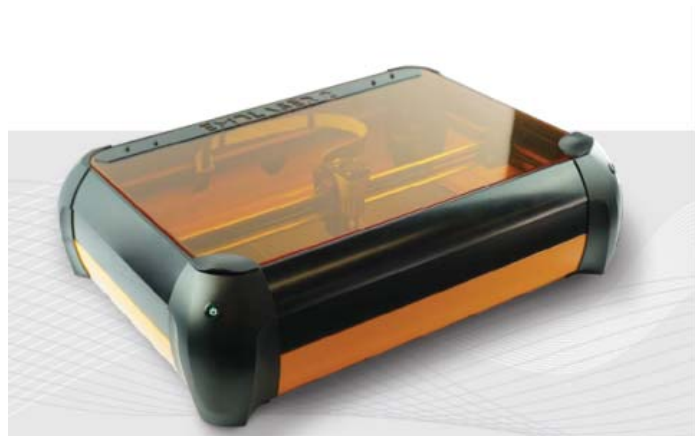


Retinal injury from a 1 watt laser



Laser cutters are only safe to use if they are fully enclosed and have interlocks to ensure that laser production ceases if a cover is opened.

Enclosed laser cutter. This is OK.



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