



(U//LES) Laser Pointers Used to Disrupt Law Enforcement Operations

(U//LES) During the FBI’s Preventing Violence and Criminal Activity in Protection of Lawful Protests Command Post in early June 2020, the FBI collected intelligence regarding the illicit use of laser pointers.³ Laser pointers were intentionally used to disrupt the vision of law enforcement officers, security cameras, and pilots of government and media aircraft, creating a potential risk to the safety of both lawful protesters and law enforcement. Since 12 June 2020, the FBI has not received information indicating intentional laser pointer use against law enforcement personnel or equipment during lawful protests; nevertheless, the potential for such activity remains.

- (U//FOUO) In early June 2020, multiple postings online recommended the use of laser pointers to counter police crowd control efforts, according to FBI reporting.^{1, 2} A 2 June 2020 online post stated, “for the next BLM757 protest we need to bring lasers,” with an attached video in which a “Hong Kong eye doctor explains how laser pointers used by protesters can be dangerous for Riot Police officers’ eyes,” according to FBI reporting.³ A separate 2 June 2020 post to an identified group’s webpage contained the phrase, “Protest Roles,” which described one role as “protestors who use laser pointers to obstruct surveillance cameras, drones, and police visors,” according to an FBI report.⁴
- (U//FOUO) From 30 May to 12 June 2020, five laser incidents targeting helicopters occurred in Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Texas, and Virginia; in addition to one incident in which law enforcement personnel in Washington, DC, were targeted, according to FBI reporting.⁵
- (U//LES) According to FBI reporting, protestors in Seattle aimed lasers and strobe lights at officers while clashing with police and National Guard lines, on 7 June 2020.⁶ On 6 June 2020, an identified individual had been arrested for shining a laser pointer at a Georgia State Patrol helicopter while standing among protestors in Atlanta, according to FBI reporting.⁷



(U) "Laser Pointer Hazard for Pilot"

(U) Source: US Government website | Federal Aviation Administration | "Laser Laws and Enforcement" | 19 August 2019 | www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/lasers/law_enforcement_guidance/ | accessed 30 June 2020.

^a (U) Laser pointers are typically used for pointing at screens during presentations. According to the Federal Aviation Administration, aiming a laser at an aircraft can interfere with a pilot’s vision, potentially resulting in a crash. Deliberately shining a laser at an aircraft is a federal crime.



- (U//LES) On 4 June 2020, an identified individual used a green laser to illuminate a Minnesota State Patrol aircraft circling Minneapolis in support of ongoing law enforcement operations. The laser was used for more than 20 minutes, even as the aircraft attempted evasive maneuvers, according to FBI reporting.^{8,9}
- (U//LES) Between 4 and 6 June, the use of lasers and strobe lights to target security cameras, media vehicles, and law enforcement was reported in Las Vegas, Nevada, as well as Texas and Ohio, according to FBI reporting.^{10,11,12}

(U) Prepared by Directorate of Intelligence / Global Intelligence Section