

# News story: Tougher laser misuse laws come into force

- new penalties for those targeting lasers at vehicle operators come into force today
- laws seek to protect passengers and operators from growing concern of lasers
- 5 years in prison and unlimited fines now an option for worst offenders

New laws introducing tough penalties for people who target vehicles including train, planes, cars and boats with lasers come into force today (10 July 2018).

The Laser Misuse (Vehicles) Act means that offenders will face much tougher penalties of up to 5 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.

The act also expands the law to protect air traffic controllers carrying out important flight navigation work to keep people safe.

And police and law enforcement now have more powers to catch and prosecute offenders as there is no longer a need to prove intention to endanger a vehicle.

Baroness Sugg, Aviation Minister, said:

Lasers, used recklessly, can have very serious, potentially fatal consequences. This government has toughened up the law to crack down on this dangerous behaviour.

These new laws offer greater protection for operators and passengers alike against irresponsible and reckless laser use.

The tough new legislation was introduced in December and latest figures show the number of laser aviation incidents fell in March to the lowest levels since 2009.

Head of Flight Safety at BALPA, Dr Rob Hunter said:

The public needs to recognise that lasers are not toys and shining one at an aircraft endangers all those on board and anyone on the ground.

The police now have greater powers, and anyone caught could face 5 years in jail.

This legislation removes the need for police officers to establish proof of intention to endanger so people will find it much harder

to hide behind the claim they 'did it by accident'.

If you have bought a laser for your kids or have one that you don't really need, we suggest you take the batteries out and throw it away.

It's not worth you, or someone close to you, getting a criminal record for the sake of what is mistakenly believed to be a toy.