

Laser Safety

Devices that use laser light have so many practical uses. Because they are so common in industry today, they are sometimes taken for granted. Lasers should always be treated with respect. They represent dangers to those who work with them, and those who work around them.

Lasers are generally divided into four basic classifications. These classifications are based upon a system of graded risk. The higher the class, the greater the potential there is for personal injury, particularly to the eyes or skin.

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Class I | Under normal conditions, will not produce a personal injury hazard. |
| Class II | Low powered, visible laser beams normally present not hazard if viewed for short periods. Blinking or turning away is a normal human response. |
| Class IIIa | No hazard if viewed for only momentary periods without protection. |
| Class IIIb | Can produce a hazard if viewed directly. |
| Class IV | Hazardous to view with the naked-eye under all conditions. This class also has the potential for starting a fire and inflicting skin damage. |

Laser manufacturers are required to record the appropriate classification on the laser. If it is missing, or, if the laser has been modified, you should determine its class and safety requirements before activating the system. Some of the basic safety precautions for lasers are:

- Every laser operator must be trained and qualified. Operators must have proof of this qualification and it must stay with them at all times.
- Work areas where lasers are used must be posted with standard warning placards.
- A laser must never be intentionally directed at another employee.
- The laser must be turned off, capped or its beam shuttered when left unattended, such as at meal times, overnight, or during a work shift change.
- Lasers must not be used when it is raining, snowing, foggy, or heavy dust is in the air. Such conditions may deflect or scatter the radiation. If production cannot be postponed, then employees must keep well out of range of the source and target of the laser.

The next time you find yourself working near a laser or laser-guided equipment, check the classification. What are the precautions? What PPE is required? Do posted signs warn of the lasers use?

Respect CAUTION or DANGER signs. They are there to keep you out of harm's way.

Products and services are provided by one or more insurance company subsidiaries of W. R. Berkley Corporation. Not all products and services are available in every jurisdiction. Certain coverages may be provided through surplus lines insurance company subsidiaries of W. R. Berkley Corporation through licensed surplus lines brokers. Surplus lines insurers do not generally participate in state guaranty funds and insureds are therefore not protected by such funds. Berkley Life Sciences conducts business in California as Berkley LS Insurance Solutions, LLC, a licensed surplus lines broker (License Number 0H44165).

This material is provided to you for general informational purposes only. Coverage afforded under any insurance policy issued is subject to the individual terms and conditions of that policy as issued. Claims scenarios are hypothetical in nature and for illustrative purposes.

Maintaining safe operations and a safe facility in accordance with all laws is your responsibility. We make no representation or warranty, express or implied, that our activities or advice will place you in compliance with the law; that your premises or operations are safe; or that the information provided is complete, free from errors or timely. We are not liable for any direct, indirect, special, incidental or consequential damages resulting from the use or misuse of this information. You are not entitled to rely upon this information or any loss control activities provided by us and you may not delegate any of your legal responsibilities to us. All loss control activities are conducted solely for the purpose of, and in accordance with, our underwriting activities.