

**Finance and Corporate Services**  
Information Management

27 February 2012  
FOIA reference: F0001298

Dear XXXX

I am writing in respect of your recent application dated 11 February 2012, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your request:

*"Please could you tell me the area of the zones I need to be outside to use a laser pointer legally and not affect aircraft".*

Our response:

In assessing your request in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), we are able to provide the information below.

There are no 'zones' that determine whether a laser pointer can be used legally and without affecting aircraft.

Guidance for the use of Laser pointers is published in CAA Publication CAP 736. which provides guidance on the Operation of Directed Light, Fireworks, Toy Balloons and Sky Lanterns within UK Airspace. I have provided a link to this publication below.

<http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP736.PDF>

Protection of pilots against deliberate or accidental laser beam strikes is of significant concern to the CAA and the deliberate and malicious laser targeting of airborne aircraft has the potential to impact upon aircraft safety and could lead to civil prosecution. In particular, Article 222 of the Air Navigation Order 2009 states that a person must not direct or shine any light at an aircraft in flight so as to dazzle or distract the pilot of the aircraft.

Should you use a laser pointer, for example in relation to astronomy, and are aware of an aircraft in the vicinity you should turn the laser off until you are sure that the aircraft has moved on.

In addition, laser safety guidance can also be obtained from the Health Protection Agency as follows:

Tel: 01235 831600; Fax: 01235 833891; email: [laser@hpa.org.uk](mailto:laser@hpa.org.uk).

**Civil Aviation Authority**

Aviation House GW Gatwick Airport South Crawley West Sussex England RH6 0YR [www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk)  
Telephone 01293 768512 [rick.chatfield@caa.co.uk](mailto:rick.chatfield@caa.co.uk)

If you are not satisfied with how we have dealt with your request in the first instance you should approach the CAA in writing at:-

Mark Stevens  
External Response Manager  
Civil Aviation Authority  
Aviation House  
Gatwick Airport South  
West Sussex  
RH6 0YR

[mark.stevens@caa.co.uk](mailto:mark.stevens@caa.co.uk)

The CAA has a formal internal review process for dealing with appeals or complaints in connection with Freedom of Information requests. The key steps in this process are set in the attachment.

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you have a right under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act to appeal against the decision by contacting the Information Commissioner at:-

Information Commissioner's Office  
FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
[www.ico.gov.uk/complaints.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/complaints.aspx)

Should you wish to make further Freedom of Information requests, please use the e-form at <http://www.caa.co.uk/foi>.

Yours sincerely

Rick Chatfield  
FoIA & EIR Case Manager

## **CAA INTERNAL REVIEW & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

- The original case to which the appeal or complaint relates is identified and the case file is made available;
- The appeal or complaint is allocated to an Appeal Manager, the appeal is acknowledged and the details of the Appeal Manager are provided to the applicant;
- The Appeal Manager reviews the case to understand the nature of the appeal or complaint, reviews the actions and decisions taken in connection with the original case and takes account of any new information that may have been received. This will typically require contact with those persons involved in the original case and consultation with the CAA Legal Department;
- The Appeal Manager concludes the review and, after consultation with those involved with the case, and with the CAA Legal Department, agrees on the course of action to be taken;
- The Appeal Manager prepares the necessary response and collates any information to be provided to the applicant;
- The response and any necessary information is sent to the applicant, together with information about further rights of appeal to the Information Commissioners Office, including full contact details.