

Laser pointers threatening safety of Vance pilots, violating federal law

Posted on June 2, 2020 by Business Editor



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VANCE AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. – Lasers pointed toward cockpits, even when the aircraft is 500 feet overhead, are dangerous not only to the pilot, but to the community at large.

In the past 10 months, and twice in the last few weeks, Vance AFB pilots have reported lasers shining into their cockpits from various locations around Enid, Oklahoma.

Each incident was reported to local police, who are investigating. If the perpetrators are located, they face a federal charge punishable by up to five years in prison.

But it's not just that it's against the law. "Pointing a laser, no matter how small, at an aircraft flying is incredibly dangerous to the pilot and the populated areas below," said Lt. Col. Christopher Occhiuzzo, Vance's Chief of Safety.

"It's not a game. Lasing the cockpit can distract or cause serious injury to pilots who already have a lot going on while they're airborne," Occhiuzzo.

Lasing has also been known to leave an afterimage or blind a pilot for precious seconds. At Vance, this is particularly dangerous because all of the incidents have been in the evening, while the aircraft were either landing or performing touch-and-go maneuvers.

<https://www.aetc.af.mil/News/Article/2205958/laser-pointers-threatening-safety-of-vance-pilots-violating-federal-law/>

