



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS  
Flight Safety Division  
Department of Civil Aviation  
SSR International Airport

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**NOTICE TO AIRCRAFT OPERATORS**

Subject:	Number: <b>02/2010</b>
<b>Illumination of Aircraft by Bright Lights or Lasers</b>	Number of pages: <b>3</b>
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**Background:**

The DCA is receiving an increasing number of reports of aircraft being illuminated by laser-generated lights. Laser technology has improved over the years and it is now possible to purchase high-power lasers that could cause serious problems to aircraft operation through the distraction and possible incapacitation of pilots.

This notice provides information to aircraft operators on actions that could be taken by crew if their aircraft are illuminated by bright lights or lasers during operation. Guidance is also provided on recommended mitigation, reporting and follow-up action.

**Content:**

*Crew Mitigation Strategies:*

The time and location of unauthorised illumination of an aircraft by a bright light or laser are impossible to predict, although there is evidence that aircraft on approach to SSR International Airport, from either north-west or south-east, are increasingly likely to be subject to unauthorised illumination.

When operating into an area where there is an increased probability of unauthorised illumination of the aircraft crews should ensure that, where possible, one pilot remains on instruments to minimise the effects of a possible illumination.

In the event that unauthorised illumination is encountered the following actions are recommended:

- If exposed to a very bright light or to laser illumination direct eye contact with the beam should be avoided and eyes should be shielded to the maximum possible extent consistent with aircraft control and safety.

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- Consideration should be given to manoeuvring the aircraft so that the light no longer illuminates the flight deck. Crews should obtain authorisation from Air Traffic Control before deviating from their cleared flight path, having first dealt with any immediate safety concerns. If absolutely necessary an emergency should be declared.
- Crews operating multi-pilot aircraft should declare visual condition to other pilots and consider handing control to the other pilot if one pilot's vision has been affected.
- Crews manually flying aircraft fitted with modern autopilots should consider autopilot re-engagement.
- Crews should report unauthorised illuminations of their aircraft to Air Traffic Control, by radio, as soon as possible following an incident. The report should include the position and altitude of the aircraft at the start of the event, the colour or colours of lights, originating direction and position of the light and any other information available.
- Pilots exposed to illumination should assess their visual function (e.g. by reading approach charts or instruments) and should avoid rubbing their eyes.

Reports submitted by pilots will be used by Air traffic Control to advise other aircraft of possible hazards and may be used by police or other government agencies in taking action necessary to protect the safety of aviation operations in Mauritius.

While details of the position of any light source will be valuable in preventing further occurrences any attempt to provide detailed reports should not be allowed to interfere with the pilot's primary task of operating the aeroplane. It may therefore be appropriate to make only a brief report at the time of the incident and then to provide further information to Air Traffic Control during a lower workload phase of flight, for example after landing.

### *Follow-up Actions*

Crews who have been subject to bright light or laser illumination can expect mild and transient visual impairment, e.g. a retinal after-image remaining visible for a short time, or short-lived flash blindness of the sort expected after a normal 'flash' photograph has been taken. It is recommended that, following an illumination incident believed to be from a laser, affected crew should seek medical evaluation from a qualified vision specialist before returning to flying duties (see ICAO document 9815, Manual on Laser Emitters and Flight Safety, Chapter 4). The incident should be reported to the DCA under the Mandatory Occurrence Report (MOR) scheme. The MOR should give as much detail of the occurrence as possible and should include details of any post-flight medical assistance needed or given to crewmembers.

### *Other Action by the Authorities*

The Police and Airport Operator are taking measures to prevent these occurrences and Air Traffic Control have instigated procedures to ensure that all events are reported to the authorities in a timely manner. The Police will take action in response to reported incidents.

### **Applicability:**

All commercial and non-commercial aeroplane operators should take note of the contents of this notice and issue appropriate guidance to their crews.

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**Authority:**

Issued by the Director of Civil Aviation.

*Andrew M McKechnie*

Captain Andrew McKechnie.  
**for Director of Civil Aviation**