

ILDA Scores Success With Air Safety Rules

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It's taken nearly five years, but a key aviation safety committee recently adopted a set of recommendations for outdoor laser shows that features many provisions backed by ILDA. The "SAE G-10T" aviation advisory committee began looking into laser light show safety as it related to aircraft operation in 1995, and at one point considered a moratorium on laser light shows. But after years of work by a number of ILDA members (spread out over 30 committee meetings), the process has turned out to be a success both for the laser display industry and for aviation safety in general.

In July 1999, G-10T issued a major report summarizing its five years of research. ILDA was able to contribute in a number of key areas:

- ILDA was a major proponent of the G-10T's recommendation that all lasers in airspace (whether from displays, scientists, or industry) be treated equally. This is a significant improvement over current U.S. law, where laser displays are the only major outdoor laser use that can legally be restricted. The G-10T's recommendation helps protect laser shows since there is less pressure for authorities to ban displays and then assume the problem is solved. Most importantly, it helps protect aviation since all lasers are properly evaluated for their potential hazard.

- ILDA was able to retain aircraft observers (spotters) as a means of controlling laser light. In 1995, the FAA issued a regulation erroneously stating that spotters could not be relied upon as a control measure. ILDA continually worked to ensure that spotters could be used, and this was incorporated into the G-10T report.

- ILDA successfully included restrictions on pilots flying moth-like into laser beams. This behavior has plagued venues such as EPCOT, where beams are often shut off due to sight-seeing aircraft. G-10T is recommending that "no pilot shall deliberately operate an aircraft into ... an area where lasers or other directed bright lights are in use".

- Finally, ILDA was able to refine a new

laser operations reporting form for the FAA. This two-page form should make it easier to apply for permission to do a laser show. ILDA helped develop the form, tested it on laser users, and made major changes as a result.

G-10T's report was coordinated with other major groups, including the FAA,

Transport Canada, the International Civil Aviation Organization, and the American National Standards Institute. These groups now can release their own reports, which reference or are based directly on G-10T's findings. The hard work by ILDA and other G-10T members will have a positive worldwide impact.