

## Aurora resident charged following laser strikes on police helicopter

A 29-year-old Aurora man has been charged with mischief endangering life after allegedly aiming a laser pointer at a York Regional Police helicopter.

On Saturday, September 18, at approximately 8.25 p.m., Air2 (police helicopter) was flying over the area of Wellington Street West and George Street on general patrol, when the pilot and tactical flight officer were struck by a bright light source, said Constable Maniva Armstrong. The crew engaged in safety measures and were able to direct officers to the location of the suspect outside of a residence on Hillview Road. The suspect was arrested and has been charged in connection with the incident. He was found to be in possession of a YL-Laser 303-laser pointer pen.

Ryan Eusler faces charges of mischief endangering life, endangering security of an aircraft in flight under the Aeronautics Act, and unlawfully project bright light into navigable airspace under the Canadian Aviation Regulation.

The charges have not been proven.

York Regional Police reminds the public of the potential harm laser pointers can cause, said Constable Armstrong. Health Canada warns that a split-second look into a laser pointer can result in a condition called flash blindness. This is similar to the effect you get during flash photography, where the image of the flash remains in your eyes for a few seconds, then fades away. However, for a pilot in control of an aircraft flying over populated areas, the consequences can be very serious.

Those who aim these pointers at aircraft are putting lives in danger, not only in the aircraft but on the ground, as there is a significant potential for harm to the pilot as well as the prospect of a crash.

**By Brock Weir** Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter