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Laser Safety FAQs

What is the Laser Safety difference between a Class II and Class IIIb laser?

Class II lasers emit low power (< 1 mW) of visible light (400 to 710 nm).

Class IIIb lasers emit intermediate power (continuous 5 – 500 mW or pulsed up to 10 J/cm^2) of any wavelength (over 180 nm).

Why are the VibroMet systems Class IIIb lasers?

The VibroMet 500 LDV system is a Class IIIb laser because it emits about 10 mW (always less than 20mW) of 780 nm (infrared) light.

What are the safety controls required for Class IIIb lasers?

Safety controls for Class IIIb lasers can be divided into two categories: those provided by the manufacturer and those put in place by the users.

Manufacturer provided controls:

- Appropriate labeling affixed to the laser
- Keyed interlock system with laser emission indicator light
- Written Laser Safety Precautions (provided in User Manual)

User provided controls:

- Personnel qualified to use and supervise others in using the laser system.
- A controlled well lit area in which to use the laser system, with appropriate signs posted.

Some common sense safety rules for lasers are:

- Never look directly into the laser beam or its reflection.
- Wear appropriate laser protection eyewear.
- Keep all unnecessary personnel out of the controlled work area.
- Shut down the laser system when not in use.
- Never leave the laser system running unattended.
- Never track individuals or vehicles with the laser beam.

To learn more about government laser safety regulations, see: US FDA, Dept. Health & Human Service, Sub Chapter J – Radiological Health, Part 1040 – Performance Standards for Light – Emitting Products, Section 1040.10 Laser Products.