Fresno County Sheriff - Coroner’s Office
Margaret Mims, Sheriff - Coroner

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News Release

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10 Year Old Boy Caught Pointing Laser at FSO Aircraft

On the evening of March 7th, members of the Fresno County Sheriff’s Office Air Support Unit were operating E.A.G.L.E. 3, our fixed-wing airplane, on a call for service. While flying over the city of Parlier at an altitude of 5,000 feet, our crew was distracted by a bright green laser light that was repeatedly flashing throughout the cockpit. Using the plane’s onboard camera system, our tactical flight officer was able locate a person outside a home who was aiming a laser pointer at the airplane.

Deputies notified Parlier Police and their officers responded to the home on the 13000 block of 7th Street. They contacted a 10 year old boy and his father. It was determined that the boy was in the backyard, intentionally shining the laser into the sky where the airplane was flying. Officers confiscated the laser, which has a powerful beam that can travel five miles. No arrests were made, however, a crime report with a charge of pointing a laser beam at an aircraft is being submitted to the District Attorney’s Office and Juvenile Probation. They will determine if any charges will be filed.

It is important to note that the area where this happened is the path that commercial aircrafts fly for landing at Fresno Yosemite International Airport, so this action could have also caused a hazardous situation for their pilots. According to the Fresno Air Traffic Tower, there were 31 aircraft laser strikes reported in 2016 for the Fresno area.