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**BLINDED BY THE LIGHT  
CHALLENGE INTRODUCTION SCRIPT**

Lasers are everywhere – medicine, manufacturing, consumer devices, telecommunications, research – so it is of vital importance that safety be first in mind for those who use them. Sometimes people react to lasers with fear. For example, when bar code scanners were first introduced in supermarket checkout lanes, some clerks stood as far from the laser scanner as their arms would allow because they feared the laser radiation. At the other end of the safe-use spectrum are laser users you find on the internet who have the attitude "It's just a light." To use lasers safely requires knowledge of the properties of laser light, the hazards of laser operation, and a dose of common sense.