



PRESS RELEASE

On 9/13/18 the Kings County Sheriff's Office airplane was on patrol and manned by a Kings County Sheriff's Office pilot and a Lemoore Police Tactical Flight Officer.

At about 2030 HRS the airplane was flying over the City of Lemoore when a bright green laser illuminated the cockpit, blinding the flight crew for several seconds.

Using the high technology onboard surveillance camera equipment, the Sheriff's Office airplane flight crew was able to identify the person shinning the laser at them and they were able to see he was standing in the driveway of a home in the 1000 block of Oakdale Ln. The flight crew then summoned the assistance from the Lemoore Police Department who arrived on scene within a few minutes.

The suspect, later identified as Victor Mena, was found with the laser in his pocket. Mena admitted to shinning the laser at the flight crew and he told officers he believed the airplane was a drone.

Mena was subsequently arrested and booked in to the Kings County Jail for a felony charge of pointing a laser at an aircraft.

The Kings County Sheriff's Office takes the crime of shinning a laser at an aircraft very seriously. The intensity of a laser pointed at an aircraft blinds the flight crew and could result in the airplane crashing. A laser can also cause permanent damage to the eyes of those inside the aircraft.

Flight crew officials describe the intensity of a laser strike as being equivalent to someone driving down the freeway at 100 miles per hour and someone shining a bright flashlight directly in to the drivers eyes, without the ability of the driver to stop or pullover.

The Sheriff's Office is reminding the citizens of Kings County, should you point a laser at an aircraft you will be pursued and arrested.