

## Laser Barcode Readers

If you think of a barcode scanner, you probably visualize something involving a red laser beam. It is this laser beam that is an integral part of the functionality of a barcode reader.

Similar to pen-type scanners, laser scanners use virtually the same type of technology, but instead of swiping the scanner across a barcode, the scanner is just held in front of the barcode and it automatically registers. This is possible because of a tiny mirror that goes back and forth quickly or a little prism which rotates; both of these styles reflect the laser beam in a fast, forth and back motion, which means that the scanner itself doesn't have to be moved across the barcode, instead it can stay in place, and the laser reads the barcode by itself.

Waves of light are read by a photodiode in the scanner, which decodes the light that is reflected by the mirrors. Laser scanners are the single most common type of barcode reader in use today, at least in the way of technology. The housing or casing types vary according to the purpose of the scanner, while still using the same technology.

It is important to note that with laser scanners, certain precautions are to be taken, especially with handheld laser scanners. One should always be careful to avoid shining the laser beam into their eyes. Generally, this isn't a problem when used by adults in a working environment. But if you are using a laser scanner at home, or around children, it is important to remember that they are not toys.

In the retail world, laser scanners are incredibly useful. Imagine how much more time consuming and frustrating it would be if the clerk at the grocery store had to run a pen-type scanner across each and every item you had in your cart! But with laser technology, all we have to do is throw our items onto the conveyor belt and the clerk simply waves them in the general area of the laser scanner and into our bags in one smooth motion.

Special Note: Supermarkets employ a slightly more sophisticated version of the basic laser scanner, but which still uses the same technology. Don't forget that laser scanners come in handheld models as well, which are useful for bigger, heavier things, like furniture.

## About the Author

Everything you want to know about [barcode readers](#)

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