

For Immediate Release

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NOCSAE Begins Third-Party Certification Requirement for Athletic Equipment *New process among topics discussed at January 2015 NOCSAE standards meeting*

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (Jan. 17, 2015) – This month the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) will begin requiring third-party certification for athletic equipment to meet NOCSAE standards, in accordance with ANSI/ISO national and international guidelines.

Under the new requirement, manufacturers will contract with Safety Equipment Institute (SEI), an independent ANSI/ISO 17065 accredited certifying body, to certify their equipment as compliant with NOCSAE standards. As part of the process, SEI will conduct onsite quality audits, evaluate testing procedures and randomly select products to test for compliance. The NOCSAE board of directors made the decision to transition to third-party certification in October 2013 following almost two years of discussion, evaluation, and planning. Previously, manufacturers were responsible for testing and self-certifying their athletic equipment to NOCSAE standards.

“Transitioning to third-party certification will enhance the integrity of all NOCSAE standards,” said Mike Oliver, NOCSAE executive director. “This gives athletes and manufacturers alike confidence their athletic equipment has been tested by a neutral, independent body to meet the highest safety standards. This is the most stringent and unbiased way to determine standards compliance, as the third-party cannot have any connection to manufacturers or products they certify.”

Details of the new certification process were discussed Friday at NOCSAE’s standards meeting in Phoenix. All manufacturers are required to sign agreements with SEI by January 31. NOCSAE will stagger its transition to third-party certification through early 2016, based on manufacturers’ production seasons for athletic equipment. Baseball and softball equipment will be the first, requiring compliance by the end of August. Football, polo and lacrosse equipment will require compliance by the end of October, with the exception of football gloves which will comply by the end of December. Soccer shin guards are the final standards to implement third-party certification, in January 2016.

Friday’s NOCSAE standards meeting also included the following discussion and developments:

- The draft football helmet standard to include pneumatic ram testing for rotational forces is on-track for elevation to final status at the June 2015 board meeting, with Friday’s discussion centered on determining the pass/fail threshold. This will be the first helmet standard to test for rotational forces.
- Research continues into a separate standard for youth helmets. Currently, small-sized helmets are required to meet the same standard as medium- and large-sized helmets. Recent research indicates that youth-sized helmets have a lower helmet-weight to head-mass ratio than adult-sized helmets. However, preliminary pneumatic ram testing indicates that small-sized helmets which have less mass don’t perform as well in rotational impact tests as medium or large helmets of the same model, which is likely due to their lighter weight. At this time, there is not enough data to suggest a helmet mass limit for youth-sized helmets.



- The board of directors voted to move several standards to proposed status – which means they will be open for comment for one year. These include proposed standards for field hockey headgear and balls, and revisions to NOCSAE’s corrosion testing standard. These standards will be open for public comment until January 2016, at which time they will be voted on as final standard. The draft versions of these standards are available for review at www.nocsa.org.

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About NOCSAE

NOCSAE, the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment, is an independent and nonprofit standard-setting body with the sole mission to enhance athletic safety through scientific research and the creation of performance standards for protective equipment. Formed in 1969, NOCSAE is a leading force in the effort to improve athletic equipment and, as a result, reduce injuries. NOCSAE efforts include the development of performance and test standards for football helmets, gloves and facemasks, baseball and softball batter’s and catcher’s helmets, baseballs and softballs, ice hockey helmets, soccer shin guards, lacrosse helmets and facemasks and polo helmets. NOCSAE is comprised of a board of directors representing stakeholders from a number of groups – including consumer and end users, equipment manufacturers and reconditioners, athletic trainers, coaches, equipment managers, and academic and sports medicine associations. These diverse interests have joined forces in an attempt to arrive at a common goal of reducing sports-related injuries. NOCSAE is a nonprofit, charitable organization supported by individuals and organizations with an interest in athletics. For more information, please visit www.nocsa.org.

