



National Operating Committee on
Standards for Athletic Equipment

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Certification to NOCSAE Standards and Add-on Helmet Products

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Products designed to be added to a football helmet are being marketed and sold; some are intended to measure impacts, while others are expressly marketed as improving a helmet's performance. Some products claim the ability to protect against concussions. Regardless of the truth of such claims, the addition of those products to a certified helmet changes the model, by definition, under the NOCSAE standards. For many years NOCSAE standards have defined a helmet model as a helmet "intended to be identical in every way, except for size." Any changes, additions or alterations of the model, except for size, color or graphics, even if made by the original manufacturer, require that a new model name be created and a separate certification testing process begin for that new model. This concept of limiting certification to a specific

model is commonly found in national and international helmet standards.

- NOCSAE itself does not certify any product, it does not “approve” or “disapprove” of any product and has no authority to grant exemptions or waivers to the requirements imposed by the standards it writes.

- The addition of an item(s) to a helmet previously certified without those item(s) creates a new untested model. Whether the add-on product changes the performance or not, the helmet model with the add-on product is no longer “identical in every aspect” to the one originally certified.

- When this happens, the manufacturer and SEI have the right, under the NOCSAE standards, to declare the SEI certification void. The manufacturer can choose to obtain SEI certification of the new model with the add-on product

- Companies which make add-on products for football helmets have the right to make their own certification of compliance with the NOCSAE standards on a helmet model, but when that is done, the certification and responsibility for the helmet/third-party product combination would become theirs, (not the helmet manufacturer). That certification would be subject to the same obligations applicable to the original helmet manufacturer regarding certification testing, quality control and quality assurance as well as complying with SEI third-party certification requirements.

- Products such as skull caps, headbands, mouth guards, ear inserts or other items that are not attached or incorporated in some way into the

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helmet are not the types of products that create a new model as defined in the NOCSAE standards and are not items which change the model definition.”

About NOCSAE

NOCSAE, the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment, is an independent and nonprofit standards development body with the mission to commission research, establish standards for athletic equipment and encourage the dissemination of research findings on sport injury and prevention. Formed in 1970, 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.nocsae.org.

Blog: Notes From the NOCSAE Research Desk

NOCSAE-Driven Research Led to Breakthrough in Puzzling, Fatal Sports Injury

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