

## NEWS

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**For Immediate Release:**

June 20, 2014

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### **NOCSAE Board Approves First Helmet Standard to Address Concussion Forces**

*Revised standard will require helmets to limit certain concussion-causing forces, both linear and rotational*

**BOSTON, MA (June 20, 2014)** – The National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) board of directors has approved a revised football helmet standard that will require helmets to be tested for certain concussion causing forces. This is the first helmet standard to include testing for forces that are specific to concussion risk.

"The science behind concussion forces is still in its infancy," said Dr. Robert Cantu, NOCSAE vice president and co-founder of the Sports Legacy Institute. "There are so many different factors that can lead to a concussion, we don't foresee ever having a concussion-proof helmet. This is a critical first step in improving the ability of equipment to reduce concussion risk. NOCSAE will continue to support research and evolve its standard as new data becomes available."

To date, there has been an absence of scientific data to show that any test can accurately predict a helmet's ability to prevent a concussion. However, recent NOCSAE-funded research identified brain tissue response from a concussive event and the development of a new method to test helmets, which replicates some of the rotational forces involved in a concussion.

Compliance with current helmet safety standards requires helmets to pass tests involving multiple linear impacts, delivered in varying conditions, locations and strengths. The revised testing method also evaluates a helmet's performance under a combination of rotational and linear forces associated with concussion-type injuries. The revised standard will be open for comment until June 2015. At that time, provided there are no revisions, the board is expected to vote to finalize the standard and require implementation by manufacturers by June 2016.

"The revised standard approved today introduces methods for testing certain concussion-causing forces," Dr. Cantu said. "Our next step will be to establish a threshold that helmets must meet to reduce concussion risk. NOCSAE will continue to challenge the scientific, medical and manufacturing communities to explore solutions for enhanced athlete safety."

"Players, coaches and parents are demanding that we find a way to reduce concussion risk in sports," said Michael Sims, head athletic trainer for football at Baylor University and NOCSAE board member. "The revised NOCSAE standard is a significant development in the ability for helmets to play a stronger role, and we look forward to continued improvements. But equipment can't do it alone. It's critical that safe play and return to play practices are enforced."

For concussion prevention to be truly effective, action must be taken on and off the field. According to the Centers for Disease Control Foundation Heads Up to Parents program, making sure helmets fit properly, ensuring young athletes are taught proper techniques and the rules are enforced, and requiring athletes take the recommended time off before returning to play are important ways to reduce concussion risk.

In addition to its standards revisions, the NOCSAE board today discussed details for changes to its certification process requirements. Currently manufacturers test against the standard, and then license permission to use the NOCSAE name. This process of self-certification is identical to the certification procedures CPSC uses for youth bicycle standards: CPSC Youth Bicycle Standard Certification. However, this is changing for NOCSAE. As of January 2015, NOCSAE will require third-party certification in accordance with ANSI/ISO international guidelines, in particular ISO: 17065. NOCSAE approved this program in October 2013 for implementation in January 2015.

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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](http://www.nocsa.org).*