

## NOCSAE Third-Party Certification

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In January 2015, NOCSAE began requiring third-party certification for athletic equipment to meet NOCSAE standards, in accordance with ANSI/ISO national and international guidelines. Under this requirement, NOCSAE licensed manufacturers contract with an independent certifying body to audit their procedures and quality programs, and to test, validate, and certify their athletic equipment to meet NOCSAE standards. The NOCSAE board made this decision in October 2013 following almost two years of discussion, evaluation and planning. Over the course of 2015, the transition to third-party certification was staggered based on sport-specific production seasons for equipment. As of January 31, 2016, all third-party certification for athletic equipment subject to NOCSAE standards has been implemented.

### Strengthening the Standard

Transitioning to third-party certification enhances the integrity of all NOCSAE standards, giving athletes confidence their athletic equipment has been tested by a neutral, independent body to meet the highest performance 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.

NOCSAE is the only sports standards organization to mandate third-party certification by an independent body accredited by the American National Standards Institute under ISO/IEC 17065 provisions.

### Safety Equipment Institute

Certification of compliance with NOCSAE standards is done by the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI), an independent ANSI/ISO 17065 accredited certifying body. SEI oversees the NOCSAE standards certification process through several accredited, independent laboratories that are responsible for testing to determine if products meet NOCSAE standards. SEI also conducts regular product testing and on-site quality assurance audits at each NOCSAE licensee's production facilities to ensure continued compliance.

Athletic equipment that has been certified to the NOCSAE standard by SEI will have an updated logo:



*Note: Athletic equipment with the former logo is still recognized as being certified to the NOCSAE standard.*



### How does the NOCSAE certification process work?

Manufacturers seeking to certify their products to NOCSAE standards will need to submit necessary testing fees, product testing samples, product labels, quality program manuals and other required materials to SEI. Manufacturers also will participate in a quality audit and review protocols for responding to customer complaints regarding product performance.

### Previous Manufacturer-Certification Process

Before the transition to third-party certification, manufacturers were responsible for testing and self-certifying their athletic equipment to NOCSAE standards. All self-certified products also were required to be validated annually by an independent and appropriately accredited third-party laboratory. Permission to use NOCSAE trademarked phrases and logos on properly certified equipment was given to the manufacturer through a licensing agreement that obligated the manufacturer to comply fully with all applicable NOCSAE standards and to provide proof of proper certification when requested. The responsibility to make an accurate and valid certification was solely and completely that of the manufacturer.

NOCSAE does not approve or certify any product, and a manufacturer does not rely upon NOCSAE to approve its certification or do its testing for it. Under the third-party certification requirement, SEI certifies compliance with NOCSAE standards.

### 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 feasible 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. For more information, visit [www.nocsae.org](http://www.nocsae.org).

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