

NOCSAE OVERVIEW

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
- Baseballs, batter's and catcher's helmets, fielder's headgear and facemasks
- Ice hockey helmets
- Soccer shin guards
- Lacrosse helmets, facemasks and balls
- Polo helmets

NOCSAE standards are adopted by various regulatory bodies for sports, including the NCAA and the National Federation of State High School Associations, as well as the United States Department of Defense Education Activity which oversees and regulates military base athletic programs for the children of military families around the world.

NOCSAE Leadership

NOCSAE's board of directors represents diverse interests that have joined forces for the common goal of reducing sports-related injuries. Serving without compensation, NOCSAE's board of directors is comprised of representatives selected by the following organizations

- American College of Sports Medicine
- American College Health Association
- American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine
- Athletic Equipment Managers Association
- American Medical Society for Sports Medicine
- National Athletic Equipment Reconditioners Association
- National Athletic Trainers' Association
- Sports & Fitness Industry Association
- American Football Coaches Association
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- National Collegiate Athletic Association
- National Federation of State High School Associations

Football Helmet Standards

NOCSAE has established the most rigorous standards for football helmets in the world. Originally established in 1973, NOCSAE regularly reviews and updates its football helmet performance and testing standards – applying the latest research to better protect the athlete. NOCSAE'S standards require testing football helmet performance across all levels of impact. Helmets either pass or fail the standard based on an impact energy evaluation called the Severity Index (SI). To be certified, helmets must score less than 1200 SI on each one of 29 impacts at seven different impact locations, including four lower speed impacts and 2 high temperature impacts. The SI value is a pass/fail threshold and is based on years of scientific research. Once the 1200 SI threshold is met, there is no data to support that a lower SI score reduce injury risk, especially the risk for a concussion.



There are no concussion-specific helmet standards for any helmet in any activity... yet. There has been an absence of scientific data to show that any test can accurately predict a helmet's ability to prevent a concussion. During the NOCSAE June 2015 board meeting, the NOCSAE Standards Committee Consensus Body continued discussions on the first helmet standard to include testing for forces that are specific to concussion risk. The revised standard will include tests that create and measure rotational accelerations. 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.

Research

For the past 10 years, NOCSAE has been a leading nongovernmental source for concussion-specific research funding in sports medicine and science. Since 1995, NOCSAE has devoted more than \$8 million toward concussion research by the foremost experts in sports medicine and science to develop and advance athlete safety.

Funding

NOCSAE is an independent, nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization funded primarily through licensing fees it charges to equipment manufacturers that want to have their equipment certified or recertified to the NOCSAE standards. Manufacturers and reconditioners are obligated by contract license agreement to maintain detailed quality control and quality assurance programs which includes testing helmets to make sure they meet the NOCSAE standards. Manufacturers are also required to participate in an accredited third-party certification program with the Safety Equipment Institute, ("SEI"). Approximately 75 to 80 percent of all revenue collected from these license fees is reinvested into education and research to advance the science and safety of athletes.

The Role of NOCSAE

NOCSAE sets the standard. Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) certifies equipment.

In January 2015, NOCSAE began requiring third-party certification for athletic equipment to meet NOCSAE standards, in accordance with ANSI/ISO international guidelines. Under this requirement, manufacturers will contract with SEI to obtain an independent certification of compliance with NOCSAE standards. The NOCSAE board made this decision in October 2013 following almost two years of discussion, evaluation and planning. SEI is an independent ANSI/ISO 17065 accredited certifying body that specializes in personal protective equipment.

The transition to third-party certification was staggered over the course of 2015 based on production seasons for equipment by sport. As of January 31, 2016, all third-party certification for athletic equipment will be implemented.

Manufacturers are solely responsible for product warranties. NOCSAE is not involved.

A manufacturer has the right, under the NOCSAE standards, to declare a certification void if its product is altered in any way after it has become certified and made available for sale. Some accessories can modify mass, change the center of gravity, or otherwise interfere with the designed performance of equipment. A model is certified in the condition and configuration it is offered for sale to the public. An alteration or addition to that configuration after sale may change the performance characteristics.



Consensus Standards Process

The makeup of the NOCSAE board is inclusive of all interests that are impacted by its standards.

NOCSAE invites all those who may be impacted by a standard to be involved in its development, including those who represent the sports and medical communities, manufacturers, parents and others. This complies with ANSI [due process guidelines](#), ensuring that each standard prioritizes athlete safety and that the standards are feasible for manufacturers to meet in terms of production and use. The NOCSAE by-laws and ANSI provisions require a balance of interests always be maintained on the consensus body, and these requirements prevent any single interest from having dominance on the NOCSAE consensus body or in the development and promulgation of a standard.

All NOCSAE standards meetings are open to the public.

The purpose of holding a public session on standards is to receive data and input from anyone interested in the standards being discussed and considered, and to insure the process is transparent and open.

At the conclusion of each Consensus Body Standards meeting, the NOCSAE board of directors meet to discuss the other business of the organization. Agenda items for these meetings often include evaluation of research proposals and funding, budget, and general business and administrative discussions. No decisions are made with regard to the adoption, creation, revision, or amendment to any existing or new standard. Those decisions occur only during the Consensus Body public meeting.

