

## **NOCSAE Decision to Void Certification of Warrior Regulator and Cascade R lacrosse helmets Frequently Asked Questions December 2014**

On November 20, 2014, after a detailed and independent investigation, NOCSAE determined that the Cascade R and Warrior Regulator helmets did not meet the NOCSAE standard as certified by the manufacturers. Consequently NOCSAE voided the manufacturers' certifications for these two models, directed the manufacturers to notify owners and sellers of the voided certification, and suspended its license agreements with each company.

The failure of these models to provide the necessary protection demanded by our standards has generated a number of questions and some misinformation. The following Questions and Answers are designed provide a clear and accurate overview of the process and NOCSAE's decision.

[\*What is NOCSAE? \(Pronounced Nok see\)\*](#)

[\*If NOCSAE doesn't certify or approve equipment, then who does?\*](#)

[\*What is the manufacturer required to do in order to certify its helmets meet the NOCSAE standard?\*](#)

[\*Is self-certification by manufacturers common?\*](#)

[\*What is the NOCSAE lacrosse helmet standard?\*](#)

[\*Was NOCSAE's recent decision based on information from a competitor?\*](#)

[\*What did your investigation include?\*](#)

[\*What did your investigation reveal?\*](#)

[\*Why is performing high-temperature testing important?\*](#)

[\*What should I do if I am scheduled to play in a lacrosse game soon and only have available to me a Warrior Regulator or a Cascade R helmet?\*](#)

[\*What other helmets are affected? Is it possible that other helmets that show a NOCSAE certification may actually not meet the standard?\*](#)

*What is NOCSAE? (pronounced Nok see)*

NOCSAE (National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment) is an independent and nonprofit standards development body with the sole mission to enhance athletic safety through funding scientific research and by developing and maintaining performance standards for protective equipment. NOCSAE directors represent all interests that would be materially affected by its standards. These interests include coaches, certified athletic trainers, team physicians, equipment managers, orthopedic and neurosurgical sports medicine physicians, helmet reconditioners and manufacturers. No single interest category has a dominant interest. Consistent with ANSI Due Process requirements, manufacturing interests are limited to four votes out of 16.

**NOCSAE does not approve or certify equipment, but it does take action when it determines that equipment does not in fact meet the NOCSAE standards as certified by the manufacturer.**

### *If NOCSAE doesn't certify or approve equipment, then who does?*

The certification that a helmet meets the NOCSAE standard is made by the **manufacturer**. The words on the certification logo on the helmet (or other athletic equipment) state, "Manufacturer certifies MEETS NOCSAE STANDARD," followed by a clearly visible helmet logo. Permission to use NOCSAE trademarked phrases and logos on properly certified equipment is given to the manufacturer through a licensing agreement that obligates 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 is 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.**

### *What is the manufacturer required to do in order to certify its helmets meet the NOCSAE standard?*

A manufacturer that chooses to certify a helmet to the NOCSAE standard can only do so if it signs a license agreement, and agrees to comply with all requirements of the NOCSAE standards. Those requirements include, but are not limited to:

- Creating and maintaining an effective quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) program;
- Conducting ongoing certification testing of sample sets representing production batches or lots;
- Developing supportive statistical and quantitative data from internal QC certification testing of representative samples;
- Submitting samples of certified products annually to independent and qualified test laboratories for validation;
- Regularly reporting to NOCSAE any changes to models or the addition of new models being certified;
- Keeping all certification test records and data and making that data available to NOCSAE when requested

### *Is self-certification by manufacturers common?*

Self-certification of compliance with safety and performance standards is the norm, not the exception. Almost all personal protective equipment standards and consumer-based federal safety standards, including mandatory youth bicycle helmet standards published by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) rely upon self-certification of compliance by the manufacturers. In fact the NOCSAE procedures closely follow the CPSC procedures for equipment certification of compliance. NOCSAE, like consumers, relies upon the integrity of every manufacturer who certifies equipment to our standards.

However, beginning in February 2015, NOCSAE will no longer permit manufacturer self-certification of compliance with our standards. The NOCSAE board made this decision in October 2013 following almost 2 years of discussion, evaluation, and planning. Certification of compliance with the NOCSAE standard will be done by the Safety Equipment Institute “SEI,” an independent ANSI/ISO 17065 accredited certifying body. SEI will assume the certification responsibility by sport on staggered dates throughout 2015. The effective date for lacrosse is October 31, 2015.

### ***What is the NOCSAE lacrosse helmet standard?***

NOCSAE developed and has maintained a lacrosse helmet performance standard for many years. In order to meet the standard, a lacrosse helmet must meet rigorous impact tests specifically set forth in [ND041](#). In addition, the certification of an entire model population must be premised upon an effective and properly applied quality control and quality assurance (“QC/QA”) program that includes testing a statistically large enough sample of randomly selected helmets and providing a method to analyze the sample test data to prove that all helmets in the model population would meet the standard if tested.

### ***Was NOCSAE’s recent decision based on information from a competitor?***

NOCSAE’s decision to void certification of the Warrior Regulator and Cascade R helmet models was based solely on data developed from its own independent investigation and included confidential data that was not available to any competitor. The decision to begin an investigation into these two models was prompted by third-party laboratory test results obtained by Schutt/STX and sent simultaneously to NOCSAE and the national governing bodies on September 22, 2014. The decision to decertify the Warrior Regulator and the Cascade R was based upon a detailed review of the QC internal certification test data provided by each company as well as laboratory tests conducted by the NOCSAE technical director at SIRC laboratories.

### ***What did your investigation include?***

Initially, we demanded that Schutt/STX, Warrior, and Cascade produce to us copies of all internal QC certification protocols and test data for evaluation for the helmet models in question. The laboratory test reports which had been part of the Schutt/STX documents included test data on the Schutt/STX helmet, so we included them within the scope of our request for this type of data. At the same time, we instructed the NOCSAE technical director to purchase units of the helmet models with failing test reports from independent retail sources and to begin testing them thoroughly.

### ***What did your investigation reveal?***

A review of the QC internal testing data and statistical analysis from Schutt/STX revealed no issues, and the data supported their certification of the Stallion model. The data from Cascade

and Warrior did not support certification of those models. Since the only evidence of model failures were in the Regulator and R models, we began independent testing of those models. The helmet testing by our technical director revealed that each of these models failed by significant margins in specific impact locations, although each model failed in different areas. Both models also showed evidence of significant failures during high-temperature testing. Our analysis of the internal QC testing data also showed consistently high test scores in the same locations where we recorded failures, as well as significant variability in the scores from unit to unit. The data produced also revealed that neither company recorded any internal high-temperature testing of these two models. There were other procedural and process issues discovered as well.

### ***Why is performing high-temperature testing important?***

The high-temperature test required by the NOCSAE standard involves impacting lacrosse helmets after they have been conditioned at 100° for more than four hours. We believe this test represents the temperature conditions under which a lacrosse helmet is most likely to perform. This part of our standard is very demanding because the standard also requires that the impact locations for the high-temperature testing must be the two impact locations that demonstrated the weakest portions of the helmet during the ambient temperature tests.

### ***What should I do if I am scheduled to play in a lacrosse game soon and only have available to me a Warrior Regulator or a Cascade R helmet?***

Because NOCSAE has no authority to require a recall, it cannot compel the manufacturer to physically remove these products from the market. But because the rules of play that govern lacrosse require that helmets meet the NOCSAE standard, voiding the certification effectively precludes the helmets from being used. Whether replacement models or modifications will be available is a question that must be directed to the manufacturers.

When asked, NOCSAE stands ready to cooperate with either or both companies to resolve the issues both prospectively, as well as with the decertified helmets currently in the field. Cascade has been working to develop a modification or retrofit to the model R both for new production and for models in the field, and NOCSAE has been cooperating in that process.

Ultimately, any solution proposed by either company to address the specific models will have to meet the approval of an independent certified quality auditor before NOCSAE will approve the solution. Each company will also have to successfully pass an official quality audit by SEI before the NOCSAE license agreements will be reinstated.

The speed with which these solutions can be implemented is completely within the control of the companies involved.

### ***What other helmets are affected? Is it possible that other helmets that show a NOCSAE certification may actually not meet the standard?***

At this time, the decertification applies only to the Warrior Regulator and the Cascade R lacrosse helmets. NOCSAE's investigation is continuing. If further investigation reveals other brands or models that were improperly certified, NOCSAE will make the information available to the governing bodies and to the public.