



"Commissioning research and establishing standards for athletic equipment, where feasible, and encouraging dissemination of research findings on athletic equipment and sports injuries."
The National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment

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NOCSAE statement on third party helmet add-on products and certification

There are many new products on the market that are intended to be added to helmets, in particular football helmets, which products claim to reduce concussions and make helmets safer and more protective. Whether these are additional liners or padding on the inside, or bumpers, pads, coverings or electronic devices that attach to the outside of the helmet, these products were not included in the certification testing and quality control programs that are required for all helmets that are certified to the NOCSAE standards. To address this situation, and to protect the integrity of the NOCSAE standards, the NOCSAE board of directors has adopted the following position:

“NOCSAE helmet standards are specific to models which are identical in all aspects, except as to size. The testing required to support the certification is also specific to the model being certified. NOCSAE standards require that any change in configuration, padding, shell geometry, or protective system requires a new model designation with separate certification testing. The addition of after-market items by anyone that changes or alters the protective system by adding or deleting protective padding to the inside or outside of the helmet, or which changes or alters the geometry of the shell or adds mass to the helmet, whether temporary or permanent, voids the certification of compliance with the NOCSAE standard.”

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Certification to NOCSAE Standards and Add-on Helmet Products

OVERLAND PARK, Kansas – August 8, 2013 - The National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) has released the following statement regarding equipment certified to NOCSAE standards and add-on helmet products.

"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 by the manufacturer.
- When this happens, the manufacturer which made the original certification has the right, under the NOCSAE standards, to declare its certification void. It also can decide to engage in additional certification testing of the new model and certify the new model with the add-on product, but it is not required to do so.
- 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 and licensure with NOCSAE.
- Products such as skull caps, headbands, mouth guards, ear inserts or other items that are not attached or incorporated in some way into the 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."



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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 batters' and catchers' 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.