
The 2013 Winter meeting of the NOCSAE board was held January 25th and 26th in Phoenix, AZ at the Royal Palms Resort. Following is a brief summary of key points from the meeting. If you have questions or need additional detail, please contact me.

Best regards,
Gregg

NOCSAE Board Meeting/Standards Discussion

There were 22 attendees, representing 17 licensees in attendance for the meeting.

The main agenda items included:
1. Status of the draft youth helmet standard
2. NOCSAE document 001-11m12 – QC/QA Document
3. NOCSAE document 021-12m12 – projectile test
4. Baseball/Softball Fielders Headgear Standard
5. Women’s Lacrosse Ball Standard
6. Third Party Certification and Market Policing

1. Dave Halstead, NOCSAE technical director, reviewed the Youth Football Helmet Standard, which remains in draft status. The key issues that need to be addressed for the development of a youth football helmet standard are mass limits and specific age cutoff. At this time there is not enough medical or scientific data to move a youth helmet standard forward. As science is developed to determine these factors NOCSAE will revisit the concept of a youth football helmet standard.

There was significant discussion on the proposed revisions to the NOCSAE QC/QA standards, NOCSAE documents 001-11m12 and 021-12m12. The proposed revisions have been in discussion since the June 2011 NOCSAE Board meeting. In summary the board asked for continued development of the revisions by the Technical Director and the Executive Director for review at the June 2013 Summer Board meeting. If approved at that time the earliest the revisions would go into effect would be June 2014. The documents are discussed individually below. The NOCSAE licensee technical group will continue to work with the NOCSAE technical staff to come to a resolution on acceptable revisions.

2. NOCSAE document 001-11m12 - is the document that establishes QA/QC requirements for all NOCSAE standards. The confidence level goal for all NOCSAE standards has been set at 99% by the NOCSAE board. The document was revised in the Fall of 2011 and reviewed by the licensees in a comprehensive meeting in September of 2012. Based on the September 2012 meeting numerous revisions were requested on both documents based on input from the helmet licensees. Given these
revisions were not completed in the documents presented to the board in the January 2013 meeting the licensees objected to those revisions going forward. The revisions were not approved by the NOCSAE board. A new revision will be presented to the NOCSAE board for approval at the June 2013 board meeting. The technical helmet group will continue to work with the NOCSAE technical staff to develop a QC/QA document that is acceptable. SFIA will continue to work with NOCSAE to develop separate, less stringent QC/QA requirements for non-catastrophic protection products including football gloves and soccer shin guards.

3. NOCSAE document 021-12m12 - which sets the standard for projectile impact test methods and equipment used in evaluating the performance characteristics of protective headgear, faceguards or projectiles will be reevaluated in 2013 to see if a change in the recommended test procedures are needed. With variables in the test including hardness of ball, viability of used head form and variance in cannon launch speeds; it is possible to have a wide range of acceptable performance in the tested products. One consideration is to set test requirements in G Force on impact as opposed to ball speed. The technical director and the licensee technical group will continue to work on options for modifying this test procedure. Any proposed revisions will be considered at the June 2013 Summer NOCSAE board meeting. Until an acceptable revision is reached the standard will remain unchanged.

4. Baseball/Softball Fielders Headgear Standard - became effective in January 2013 and is final. There are a significant number of new products in the market for fielder head protection that do not meet the standard which will be illegal for play should a state of league mandate head protective fielders gear. If use of protective headgear is mandated in NCAA or Federation sanctioned play it must meet the NOCSAE standard. There is one product, which has been tested that is compliant with the standard. NOCSAE will not consider a revision to the standard unless there is a specific request from a NGB to modify or create a second standard.

5. Women’s Lacrosse Ball Standard
NOCSAE, at the request of US Lacrosse is developing a separate LAX ball standard for women’s play. The goal of the new standard is the ball should be lighter and more compliant. Also, in conjunction with the proposed padded stick, possibly eliminate the need for headgear for women’s play. Rawlings has produced a test sample of the new ball for live play testing. US Lacrosse will test the balls for quality of play. The ball will also be tested in the men’s game to see if there is a noticeable change of play for men. One consideration is this proposed standard could replace the current standard if acceptable for men’s play. Results will be reviewed at the June 2013 meeting. US Lacrosse has asked the name of the product be changed to Reduced Impact ball. For the time being NOCSAE will continue to refer to this project as the Women’s Lacrosse Ball Standard to reduce the possibility of confusion.

6. Third Party Certification and Market Policing - Currently, the NOCSAE standard system is a self certifying process where the manufacturer certifies their product meets the NOCSAE standard. Due to a series of incidents where it appears manufacturers have put the NOCSAE mark on a product that did not meet the standard or did not meet the QC standards required, the NOCSAE board is considering making the NOCSAE certification a third party process. This would include policing the market to insure products delivered at retail are the same as those submitted for testing. The board asked the NOCSAE Executive Director at the June 2012 meeting to investigate the value and function of third party certification for all NEW equipment certified to the NOCSAE standard. On January 8, 2013 the
Executive Director and the Technical Director of NOCSAE met with the principals of Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) in Washington DC to review in depth, the role and function of independent third party certification of equipment. SEI specializes in the certification of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which includes equipment such as equestrian helmets and firefighter protective equipment. Under the terms of an arrangement with SEI, any manufacturer which desires to manufacture and sell athletic equipment certified to the NOCSAE standard would have to obtain certification through SEI. SEI will certify the equipment as meeting the NOCSAE standard only after making a complete evaluation of the manufacturer’s QA and QC programs, obtaining an audit inspection of the production facility or facilities, and testing the equipment to be certified. Once SEI is satisfied that all is in order, SEI would certify the equipment, maintain and publish a current database of all certified equipment by brand and model, and respond to any questions that might arise regarding the validity of any certified product. The equipment would have the same NOCSAE logo, but it would read "SEI certifies Meets NOCSAE Standard" along with their logo. It would look similar to this:

![SEI certification logo]

With the realization that space on the back of a football helmet is limited and in demand, increasing the space for the NOCSAE certification may be problematic.

Matters to be considered, apart from the seminal question of whether we should make this change, include whether to start with a single item, such as football helmets/faceguards, and then phase in the rest of the equipment, or go forward with all equipment from the beginning. In discussions the board agreed should NOCSAE move forward with the Third Party Certification program all protective headgear would be included initially.

Another matter discussed is whether NOCSAE should credit the licensee with some of the costs of this program. The extra cost to a licensee includes a participation fee to SEI for this service, plus the costs and expenses of the production facility auditor, the certification testing expenses, and any follow up audits that may be necessary for any reason. This certification process will replace the third party laboratory validation we currently require, so those expenses would no longer be incurred. The initial participation fee is on a sliding scale, based on the manufacturer's sales volume, and runs from approximately $2,800 to $6,800.

Scott Halstead prepared a report on the anticipated additional costs to a manufacturer, broken down by volume of equipment/models certified; this is an excerpt from that report:

**Estimated approximate costs to the licensee:** (since all manufacturers are supposed to be testing all model/sizes currently the below is additional costs to what they currently pay to have annual certification testing performed at an accredited third party laboratory)
**Small manufacturer** (15 model/sizes) Additional cost would be approximately **$10,700** ($5000 Participation Fee (PF), $1000 Testing Markup Fee (TMU), $2200 Application Fee (AF), $2500 Inspection and travel Fee (IF)) for their helmet line.

**Large manufacturer** (57 model/sizes) Additional cost would be approximately **$21,900** ($6000 PF, $3500 TMU, $9900 AF, $2500 IF) for their helmet line.

**An even larger manufacturer** (85 model/sizes) additional cost would be approximately **$29,600** ($6000 PF, $5400 TMU, $13,200 AF, $5000 IF) for their helmet line.

A company that has multiple locations, in a variety of countries, will pay a considerable amount more under this program, as the inspection fees and travel portion would be a bigger expense.

Initial reaction from the licensees ranged from the program should start immediately to the program is very costly and should not be implemented. The NOCSAE Board asked the Executive Director to come back with a full report with recommendations ready by the June 2013 board meeting. In the interim the licensees have to determine what cost and requirements are acceptable and the position the industry wants to consolidate around.

*Perhaps the biggest change accomplished at the January 2013 NOCSAE board meeting was the agreement of the board to allow licensees to attend the closed portion of the board meeting where standards and standards changes are discussed and voted upon. It was agreed this should be a transparent process and one in which licensees should feel free to express their opinion without concern that media or members of the general public in the room would misinterpret their comments.*

*If you have any questions or follow up please contact me.*

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