RECONDITIONING AND RECERTIFICATION OF FOOTBALL EQUIPMENT

When addressing overall player safety related to the game of football, an essential component is the recertification and reconditioning of helmets. Schools can extend the life of helmets if they follow the proper procedures and guidelines before, during and after the season concludes.

Definition of Reconditioning and Recertification:

**Reconditioning** – the inspection, cleaning, sanitizing and repair/restoration of athletic equipment to the original performance standard.

**Recertification** – the reconditioning, testing and proper labeling of athletic equipment that has previously met the NOCSAE standard and recertification standard. A helmet cannot be recertified without being reconditioned.

It is recommended that all football helmets be inspected at the end of the football season, and schedule half of a school’s inventory to be reconditioned/recertified annually. Inspection of all football helmets may identify helmets that are in need of reconditioning/recertification after each season. The helmet manufacturers recommend that football helmets be reconditioned/recertified every year and a minimum of every other year to maintain the warranty on their helmets.

As of the 2012 football season, helmets 10 years of age or older cannot be reconditioned/recertified.

The reconditioning/recertification of football helmets applies to all helmets used in grades 7-12.
When addressing overall player safety related to the game of football, an essential component is the recertification and reconditioning of equipment. No piece of equipment lasts for a lifetime, but schools can safely extend the life of equipment if they follow proper procedures and guidelines before, during and after the season concludes. It is important that the equipment manager (i.e., athletic director, coach or volunteer) has a system in place to document equipment use by players, as well as recertification and/or reconditioning dates. This information serves as a valuable resource in determining future equipment needs and expenditures while providing a historical record that can be accessed if necessary.

Careful investigation should be made prior to selecting a recertification and/or reconditioning company. Quality companies will be able to guarantee that any work performed on equipment will meet national safety standards and will most likely have some type of warranty replacement program as part of the process. Schools need to protect themselves and the participants – the company the school selects should be able to provide a certificate of product liability insurance that outlines coverage limits. It is recommended that the school perform a complete evaluation of the certificate prior to entering into any agreement.

Recertification and/or reconditioning efforts are not limited to helmets. Shoulder, rib, hip, thigh, knee, tailbone and back pads need to be cleaned, sanitized and repaired each year. The company the school selects should be able to outline the recertification and/or reconditioning process that will be used and whether or not replacement parts are the manufacturer’s original or from another source. Other items, such as football field equipment that utilizes padding of any type, should be inspected and repaired as well.

Minimizing risk in a football program should involve a comprehensive review of every aspect from player equipment to on-field equipment. Take the time to select a recertification and/or reconditioning company that has a proven track record with multiple clients. It is appropriate to check references before making a final selection. Recertification and/or reconditioning of equipment is an essential part of any football program. Creating a historical tracking record for equipment, repairing equipment to factory standards and recertifying equipment to meet national standards are expected. The following is some specific football reconditioning and recertification information for football helmets:

**Definition of Reconditioning and Recertification**

- **Reconditioning** – The inspection, cleaning, sanitizing and repair/restoration of athletic equipment to the original performance standard.

- **Recertification** – The reconditioning, testing and proper labeling of athletic equipment that has previously met the NOCSAE standard and recertification standard.
What is the recommendation on how often football helmets should be reconditioned/recertified?

The helmet manufacturers recommend every year and a minimum of every other year to maintain the warranty on their helmets. The National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) and the National Athletic Equipment Reconditioners Association (NAERA) both recommend every year. All NAERA members are licensed by NOCSAE to recondition and recertify all football helmets manufactured under the NOCSAE logo.

How often are football helmets required to be reconditioned/recertified?

The state of California is the only state that requires helmet reconditioning/recertification. The NOCSAE standards do not specify or require reconditioning or recertification of football helmets on any particular schedule or frequency. A common practice is to inspect all football helmets at the end of the football season, and schedule half of a school’s inventory to be reconditioned/recertified annually. Inspection of all football helmets may identify helmets that are in need of reconditioning/recertification after each season. As of the 2012 football season, NAERA members do not recondition/recertify any helmet 10 years or age or older.

Can a football helmet be recertified without being reconditioned?

No. All helmets taken in to a NAERA facility are required to be reconditioned and recertified. A random sample of football helmets is NOCSAE drop-tested before and after the reconditioning process with the data collected on those test helmets.