



Dear Youth Batting Helmet Manufacturer,

As the popularity of face protectors (c-flap, etc.) increases throughout baseball and softball, Little League® International has begun to receive inquiries from our families, players, and volunteers as to whether or not they're permitted in Little League play.

The safety of all our participants is our utmost concern, and, like the vast majority of youth organizations, Little League requires our batters to wear helmets that meet National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) specifications and bear the NOCSAE stamp. As face protectors, like the “c-flap,” are additions to a helmet, which require for holes to be drilled in most helmets to affix protector, Little League International contacted NOCSAE for guidance. On May 8, 2018, [NOCSAE issued a release](#), which includes the following information:

Products designed to be added to previously certified helmets for baseball, softball, football, lacrosse and other sports are being marketed and sold to consumers. Whether intended to be general improvements or expansions of the helmet's protective coverage or ability, or to collect impact data, the addition of such products to a helmet previously certified as meeting the appropriate NOCSAE standard will make the certification voidable by the helmet manufacturer. Such additions to the helmet create a new and untested model, as defined in 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 or color or graphics, even if made by the original manufacturer, requires that a new model name be created, and a separate certification testing data for that new model.

- *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 the item(s) creates a new untested model. Whether the add-on product improves 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 helmet manufacturer has the right, under the NOCSAE standards, to declare its certification void. It may elect to allow the certification to remain unaffected, or it may also 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.*

With this guidance, Little League International is asking you, as a youth helmet manufacturer, for guidance on whether or not the addition of a face protector, including the “c-flap” or similar product, will void the NOCSAE certification on any or all of the youth batting helmets your company currently sells or that may be in use by Little League players.

Little League International greatly appreciates your prompt reply, as this matter is of utmost importance to our parents, volunteers, and players.



Until we receive your response, we are encouraging parents and coaches to contact manufacturers directly to verify if their players' helmets will retain their NOCSAE certification, and, that they must produce that notice from you, the manufacturer, prior to use in any and all Little League-related activity. Without manufacturer-approval, Little League International will follow the advisement that *"the addition of such products to a helmet previously certified as meeting the appropriate NOCSAE standard will make the certification voidable by the helmet manufacturer,"* and helmets with a face protector will not be permitted for Little League-use. Little League International will encourage anyone wishing to have additional face protection to use a helmet with a full faceguard that is NOCSAE certified.

We intend to share this letter with all our constituents, as well as all manufacturer responses, on LittleLeague.org/HelmetAdditions and through Little League's social media and email channels, to better inform our Little League community as to whether or not your helmets still meet NOCSAE standards if a face protector, such as a "c-flap," has been added to them, and therefore approved for Little League-use.

Thank you again for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Patrick Wilson

Senior Vice President, Little League Baseball and Softball