



## Heads Up Issue 18

**Date:** December 31, 1997  
**To:** All Snell Certified Manufacturers  
**From:** Edward B. Becker, Executive Director

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This is eighteenth the of the Foundation's quarterly newsletters to the helmet manufacturing industry. The seventeenth was sent out last September. Comments and items for inclusion in subsequent issues are invited.

### **Manufacturers Meeting**

A manufacturers meeting is tentatively scheduled for Friday, February 20, 1998, in Indianapolis, the day before the opening of the Powersports Expo. One of the expected topics of discussion is the recent report from Thom et al. at USC investigating changes and improvements for Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 218, the DOT motorcycle helmet standard.

The precise time and place of the meeting have yet to be determined. If you are interested in attending, please contact the California office. Additional topics for discussion will be welcomed.

### **HPE Offers Certification Testing Alternative**

The Snell Memorial Foundation will accept the results of helmet testing performed at Head Protection Evaluations (HPE), a private, for-profit helmet testing company in England. Manufacturers seeking Snell Certification may submit products directly to HPE for testing according to the Foundation's Standards and procedures. On completion of testing, HPE will forward results directly to the Foundation's offices in California. HPE test results will be considered with equal weight to results obtained in the Foundation's own test laboratories.

The Foundation's directors have adopted this policy for the ease and convenience of European helmet manufacturers. However, the most important factor in the decision is the Foundation's confidence in the expertise and capabilities of HPE.

HPE is operated by Brian and Paul Walker who, together managed the Snell UK laboratory from the late 1980's until last May 1997. The location is at the former Snell UK address. The test

equipment has been leased from the Foundation and the Foundation has committed to work with HPE to assure that complete compatibility of equipment and test procedures is maintained.

Thus, even though this policy represents a departure from recent practice in some respects, in reality, it is a continuation of the association the Foundation has enjoyed with both Mr. Walkers and of the Foundation's confidence in their expertise and integrity.

Even so, HPE is an independent organization. HPE sets its own rates for testing services and will bill and collect for those services itself. If, on the basis of HPE testing, the Foundation determines that a helmet qualifies, Snell Certification will be issued directly and at no additional charge.

HPE may be reached at:

HPE Group  
Unit 4 Farnham Business Centre  
Dogflud Way  
Farnham, Surrey GU9 7UP  
England  
Phone (44) 01252 714920  
FAX (44) 01252 737137

We wish Brian, Paul and HPE all good fortune. I hope that they will continue to be able to provide advice and guidance to me and my colleagues in the US, and technical testing services to the European community and beyond.

### **Bicycle Helmet Program Restructure**

The Foundation will restructure the B-90, B-95 and N-94 programs. The aim of the restructuring is to improve the efficiency of the programs and so lower the fees without compromising the significance or the value of Snell Certification. It is hoped that lower unit costs for Snell Certification will increase the accessibility of protective headgear meeting the Foundation's high standards for protective performance.

A secondary aspect of the restructuring will be to establish the compliance of all products certified to B-90, B-95 and N-94 with the requirements of the standard for bicycle helmets currently being drafted by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The CPSC standard is expected to be released sometime in February and may take effect as early as Spring of 1999. Once the CPSC Standard takes effect, all bicycle helmets offered for sale in the United States will be required to meet it.

Based on my review of previous drafts of the CPSC standard, I anticipate no serious problem for any helmet currently certified to Snell B-90, B-95 or N-94. However there are procedural differences with B-95 and N-94 that may cause confusion. Furthermore, CPSC drafts have included requirements that, while present in B-95 and N-94, were not considered in 1990 when the B-90 Standard was drafted. When the CPSC Standard is released, the Foundation will modify and augment the Snell Standards and procedures as necessary in order to provide a conclusive demonstration that each B-90, B-95 and N-94 Snell Certified helmet model meets all the requirements of the CPSC Bicycle helmet standard.

Although the restructuring has not yet been finalized, a tentative proposal has been circulated to many manufacturers for comment. Manufacturers and others interested in the proposal may contact Ed Becker or Steve Johnson directly at the Foundation's California offices.

## Harborview Study

Over the last year, the study of bicycle injury performed by the Harborview Medical Center Injury Prevention and Research Center has culminated in several papers published in scientific and medical journals:

Thompson DC, Rivara FP, Thompson RS. Effectiveness of bicycle safety helmets in preventing head injury: A case control study. *JAMA* 1996; 276:24:1968-73.

Thompson DC, Nunn ME, Thompson RS, Rivara FP. Effectiveness of bicycle helmets in preventing serious facial injury. *JAMA* 1996; 276:24:1974-75.

Thompson DC, Rebolledo V, Thompson RS, Kaufman A, Rivara FP. Bike speed measurements in a recreational population: Validity of self reported speed. *Injury Prevention* 1997; 3:43-45.

Thompson DC, Thompson RS, Kaufman A, Rivara FP. Increasing bicycle helmet effectiveness: The importance of proper fit and wearing position. *HMO Practice* 1997; 11(1):25-26.

Rivara FP, Thompson DC, Thompson RS, Rebolledo V. The epidemiology of bicycle injuries and risk factors for serious injury. *Injury Prevention* 1997; 3:110-114.

Rivara FP, Thompson DC, Thompson RS, Rebolledo V. Injuries involving off road cycling. *Journal of Family Practice* 1997; 44(5) 481-485.

Ching RP, Thompson DC, Thompson RS, Thomas DJ, Chilcott WC, Rivara FP. Damage to bicycle helmets involved with crashes. *Accident Analysis & Prevention* (in press September 1997).

The Foundation published an overview in September, 1996, which provides a clear, concise summary of the study and its important findings. [Circumstances and Severity of Bicycle Injuries](#) by Rivara FP, Thompson DC and Thompson RS has been posted on Snell internet web site.

## Snell Web Site

The Snell Foundation World Wide Web Site, <http://www.smf.org>, now includes more than thirty pages of helmet and head protection information. There are descriptions of the Foundation and its certification programs, lists of certified products, links to ftp downloads of Snell Standards and drafts and links to other web sites of interest.

Dr. Frank Lin maintains the site and makes bi-weekly additions and updates to the materials. Frank has received many compliments for his clear, entertaining and user-friendly presentation of this useful information. In the last six months, Sympatico, one of Canada's largest internet providers, gave the Snell pages a Four Star rating in a survey of health related web sites.

One of the primary purposes of the site is to acquaint the public with the importance of selecting and wearing the most effective protective headgear. Once the Foundation tests and certifies a helmet, we want people to wear it. If you manufacture or sell Snell certified helmets and you maintain an internet web site, please contact Dr. Lin to see about establishing a link.

Frank welcomes comments and suggestions regarding any aspect of the web site.

## **ISO Guide 25 Accreditation for Snell, CA**

As of June 2, 1997, the Snell Memorial Foundation's California laboratory has been awarded American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA) approval for helmet testing. A2LA is an internationally recognized authority administering quality laboratory accreditation programs to ISO/IEC Guide 25 "General Requirements for the Competence of Calibration and Testing Laboratories." The scope of the A2LA accreditation includes all of the tests covered in the Foundation's bicycle, motorcycle, auto racing, non-motorized sports and harness racing helmet standards. The accreditation confirms that the Foundation's California laboratory has the capability to perform Snell testing and has the quality control necessary to assure the accuracy and validity of Snell test results.

The Foundation sought this accreditation as part of its continuing commitment to quality. Since its beginning in 1957, the Foundation has urged manufacturers to design and build quality protective helmets and has urged the public to seek out and wear them. As a recognized authority in helmet safety, it is proper that the Foundation submit itself to another recognized authority to demonstrate the quality of its own testing programs and procedures.

The Foundation looks forward to continuing in the A2LA program in order to increase the recognition and value of Snell Certification Programs for both helmet manufacturers and the helmet wearing public.

## **Snell Safety Education Center (SSEC)**

As of December, 1996, the Snell Safety Education Center, a California non-profit corporation, has taken up the Snell Memorial Foundation's effort to promote the widespread use of protective headgear. The Center is dedicated to all the ideals of the Foundation: to engage in scientific, educational and charitable activities; to research and develop safety equipment for the prevention of injuries; and to develop and provide information, materials and services to encourage the use of safety equipment. However, the Center is a distinct and autonomous organization. Since there is no connection to the Foundation's testing and certification programs, the Center will be able to work more directly with consumer groups, helmet manufacturers and other charitable organizations.

Ms. Hong Zhang, who organized and directed the Foundation's current helmet education programs, will continue these efforts as president of the Snell Safety Education Center. As with the Foundation, Ms. Zhang expects to work closely with state and community groups dedicated to public safety. Working through the Center, Ms. Zhang hopes to improve and expand the support provided to these vital state and community programs.

## **S-98 and L-98 Standards**

The 1998 Standard for Protective Headgear Used in Skiing and Other Winter Activities (S-98) and the 1998 Standard for Protective Headgear for Use with Low Powered Vehicles, Mopeds and Motorized Bicycles (L-98) are now in their final form. Copies of these two new Standards as well as the Foundation's draft equestrian helmet standard are available from the Foundation's North

Highlands Office.

Manufacturers are invited to submit samples for evaluation with respect to S-98, L-98 or the equestrian draft standard. Please contact the North Highlands office for further information.

## Whom to Contact at Snell

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