

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN – Re: CERTIFICATION OF EQUESTRIAN HELMETS

Information has come to light recently with respect to equestrian helmets which has prompted SAI GLOBAL

- to make clear the differences between equestrian helmets certified to AS/NZS 3838 and those claiming conformance to EN 1384,
- to investigate appropriate actions to discover if helmets claiming EN 1384, do in fact conform.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AS/NZS 3838 & EN 1384

While the testing regime of the current editions of AS/NZS 3838 and EN 1384 provide broadly similar levels of protection (the AS/NZS is a little more stringent than the EN), the real difference, at present, lies with the certification regime in place.

Under the European system, an equestrian helmet is a medium risk product, and the certification (“CE Mark”) can be applied on the basis of a single test, with only the manufacturer responsible for any ongoing conformance. No one checks up on them.

Under the Australian system, certification by SAI GLOBAL is quite different. Not only does the model have to be shown to fully comply, but also the manufacturer is visited regularly by technically trained auditors, who examine the system of manufacture to ensure that relevant controls are in place. Further, each batch of helmets must be tested and pass all tests at an independent laboratory before it leaves the manufacturer’s premises.

SAI Global believes these differences are so significant that riders should take them into account when purchasing and wearing helmets. This table summarises the differences we see between AS/NZS 3838 and EN 1384.

	AS/NZS 3838	EN 1384
Type of Certification	StandardsMark	CE Mark
Manufacturer visited	YES (2 day audit)	NO
Use of independent test labs	YES	NO
Quality System Requirements	YES (audited regularly)	NO
Traceability of helmets to raw materials	YES	NO
Each batch independently tested	YES	NO
Mandatory follow up of complaints	YES	NO
Ongoing Certification Administered	YES – SAI Global	NONE

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PROPOSED ACTION

The recent information received by SAI Global is the result of some independent testing on helmets claiming conformance to EN 1384. These tests indicate it is possible that a helmet, which we understand is quite popular in the Australian market, may not conform to EN 1384, although it claims compliance.

SAI Global is deeply concerned about this and, as there is no organisation who has overall responsibility for on-going supervision of those EN 1384 helmets currently on the Australian market, is examining the implications of purchasing a number of these types of helmets itself, and having them formally tested to EN 1384. Should these tests confirm non-conformance, this information would be passed onto statutory bodies such as the ACCC.

SAI Global does acknowledge that its stricter certification regime under AS/NZS 3838 does add a little to the cost of a helmet, but then the question that should be asked is, how much is your head (or your child's head) worth?

Yours sincerely



SAI Global
John Webster
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