



PRESS STATEMENT

European riding helmet standard withdrawn

The EU Commission has announced that the European equestrian riding helmet standard BS EN 1384 is to be withdrawn from the Official Journal of the European Union (OJ) at its next publication. This means that hat manufacturers will no longer be able to CE-mark their hats using this standard and will need to recertify to a specification currently being developed.

The withdrawal of the standard has no effect on riding hats already on the market. Once a hat has been manufactured to a standard, it will not become "non-standard" after withdrawal and can continue to be sold and worn. If riders have hats certified to EN 1384, they can continue to use them unless stated otherwise by rules of competition.

The existing EN 1384 standard is currently in the process of revision. The withdrawal is due in part to the European working group responsible for the hat standard failing to reach an agreement on this overdue revision and subsequently causing the commission to take this drastic step.

The draft proposal for the revision to EN 1384 has to go through the laborious procedure of comment and review, and it is still unclear when the final version will be published. An interim specification is being developed by a group of EU test houses and notified bodies (VG1) that will span the gap with a new specification. We expect to have this confirmed within the next few days.

In future, CE-marked riding hats will have to be successfully tested and certified against an alternative specification to allow CE certification to continue. Companies can choose which they use and could include the new VG1 specification, the revised EN 1384 once published and PAS 015. Riding hats cannot be CE-marked solely to Snell, ASTM F1163 or AS/NZ 3838: 2006 without additional testing.

The EN 1384 and thus the BS EN 1384 specifications have proved to be a popular standard throughout Europe, with wide appeal, and have saved many riders from head injury or death.

Although initially being promised a period of transition by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the industry has now received news that this option has been retracted. This means that manufacturers will need to re-certify their BS EN 1384 hats to the revised specification sooner than expected.

As a result of these recent changes, the disciplines and riding bodies within the UK will be reconsidering their hat rules for the future. Full details of the changes currently available are listed below.

British Eventing will permit BS EN 1384 hats in 2015 but not thereafter. All hats will be re-tagged in 2016, at which stage none made solely to BS EN 1384 will be tagged or permitted for use.

British riding clubs will permit BS EN 1384 hats in 2015 but not thereafter. All hats will be re-tagged in 2016, at which stage no hats made solely to BS EN 1384 will be tagged or permitted for use.

Pony Club will permit BS EN 1384 hats in 2015 but not thereafter. Full details of the revised hat tagging procedure will be communicated to the membership and volunteers shortly.

British Dressage will permit BS EN 1384 hats in 2015 but not thereafter

British Showjumping will permit BS EN 1384 hats in 2015 but not thereafter

British Horse Society will permit BS EN 1384 hats in 2015 but not thereafter. From 1 January 2016, hats made solely to BS EN 1384 will not be permitted for use in BHS-approved centres.



FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES...

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The BS EN 1384 has successfully served the needs of riders since its introduction in 1996. Before the introduction of BS EN 1384, surveys consistently showed that 33% of all equestrian injuries were to the head and face. A repeat study conducted after the introduction of EN 1384 by Dr Michael Whitlock, consultant in emergency medicine in Surrey, showed the figure to be 15%. It also showed that 90% of riders were wearing an approved-standard hat.

This figure has been confirmed by other studies to have remained constant at 15% in the past 5 to 10 years. Isolated head injuries are now fewer and might even be lower than figures show because many head injuries now do not need to get hospital treatment as a result of the hat “working”, although they might still have concussion.

2. The Official Journal of the European Union (OJ) is the official compendium of EU legislation. The deletion of the standard from the journal withdraws the presumption of conformity for the purposes of the PPE directive, meaning that companies manufacturing riding hats cannot use the BS EN 1384 as their reference for the purposes of CE certification. They must either develop their own, reference another acceptable standard (such as the PAS 015) or utilise the new specification (VG1) until such time as the revision to BS EN 1384 is completed.

3. CEN/TC 158/WG 5 is the working group for helmets for equestrian activities. The committee comprises representatives from member bodies around Europe, including those of riding bodies, notified bodies and manufacturers’ representatives. BETA does not sit on this working group.

4. In the UK, we have a long-established system of testing, certification and understanding of head protection across the equestrian market, with a wide range of CE-approved riding hats to a range of standards also available.