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ASTM Crafting Pole Vault Box Collar Specification

By Paul Steinbach — AB Senior Editor

The American Society of Testing and Materials today announced plans to address pole vault safety through a box collar specification. ASTM WK35729, Specification for Pole Vault Box Collar, is currently being developed by Subcommittee F08.67 on Pole Vault, part of ASTM International Committee F08 on Sports Equipment and Facilities.

The collar would provide padding in the landing area along the hard edges and walls of the pole vault box — the trough, typically made of steel and set in concrete, that stops the end of the pole as the vaulter jumps off the ground. The upper rim of the box can pose a hazard to vaulters who fall on it as a result of a poorly executed vault.

“The exposed hard surfaces between the pole vault box and the pole vault landing pad may be padded with a pole vault box collar, however, no standard exists that specifies the performance requirements of the box collar,” Peter McGinnis, Ph.D., professor of kinesiology, State University of New York College at Cortland, and chairman, F08.67, stated in an ASTM press release. “ASTM WK35729 is being developed to provide guidance to rule makers regarding the minimum impact attenuation that a box collar should provide.”

Once approved, the proposed new standard will potentially be referenced in the rule books of the National Federation of State High School Associations and the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

The box collar has been a talking point among pole vault safety experts [for years](#), even as changes were being made to [landing pit dimensions and perimeter padding](#). The issue picked up considerable momentum following the fatal headfirst fall into the box by Penn State vaulter Kevin Dare at the 2002 Big Ten Conference Indoor Championships. “This is the last area that really needs to be addressed,” vault coach Jan Johnson, a 1972 Olympic medalist, told [AB](#) in October 2009. “Is it going to be perfect? No. But it’s going to be a hell of a lot better than what we have now.”

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