



SFI PRESS RELEASE

Response to the Impact Racing Press Release of April 22, 2010

April 22, 2010 - Yesterday, SFI advised the racing community that Impact suits bearing 3.2A/5 certifications “made prior to 2009 have been constructed with non-compliant materials that, in SFI’s judgment, pose a safety risk to users of those suits.” Impact responded by attacking SFI certification programs (although Impact and the other major equipment manufacturers have agreed to and participated in the development of these well-established programs); by claiming it could not get a fair hearing of the decertification appeal (although Impact asked for and received an expedited appeal procedure); and by claiming that “SFI’s actions have caused racers unnecessarily to question their safety.” It is this last point that requires a very specific response.

Scientific testing just conducted on 2008 Impact 3.2A/5 suits has determined that the thread melts away in a fire. This causes the fabric to come apart since there is no longer thread to hold the suit together. SFI believes this poses a significant safety risk to the racer involved in a fire. Rather than being constructed with Nomex (heat resistant) thread, the suits were constructed with some sort of unknown non-compliant thread that melts during heat testing. This thread failure is contrary to the SFI specifications that Impact agreed to follow.

The reason that this failure was not discovered sooner is that Impact provided SFI with Nomex thread samples in order to get their products tested and certified initially. Manufacturers are only supposed to provide samples of the actual materials to be used in their products. It appears that Impact failed to comply with this procedure regarding thread. Finally, one suit tested failed to have the proper thermal protective properties in the material itself. Again, such a failure poses a significant safety risk. This safety failure by Impact is consistent with a pattern of non-compliance:



1. Last year, SFI discovered that Impact SFI 3.2A/15 and SFI 3.2A/20 rated fire suits produced in 2007 and 2008 were also made with thread that melted during testing. In addition, these suits were often poorly constructed, without sufficient protective layers of Nomex material. SFI ordered the immediate decertification and recall of these potentially dangerous products.
2. Last year, SFI discovered that Impact SFI 3.3/15 and SFI 3.3/20 boots produced in 2008 were defective. Their materials failed heat resistant testing. SFI ordered the immediate decertification and recall of these potentially dangerous products.
3. Hans Performance Products discovered last year that Impact deliberately manufactured and sold counterfeit Hans helmet clips and attached them into the helmets of unsuspecting customers. These foreign made knock-offs were inscribed with the "SFI 38.1" inscription. Impact has never participated in this program. These counterfeiting activities were occurring at the same time that Impact was manufacturing counterfeit SFI conformance labels and patches. Hans filed suit against Impact in federal court last year in Atlanta. SFI intervened and joined in the suit against Impact. That suit is pending.
4. In 2004, SFI discovered that Impact gloves bearing SFI 3.3/20 specifications were made of material that was too light and failed heat resistance testing. SFI ordered their decertification and recall.



Impact's press release claims that there "have been no burns or other injuries reported to Impact by any racer wearing Impact Race Products since its inception." If this is true, the avoidance of injuries is due in large part to the policing of Impact products by SFI.

SFI was heartened when Impact finally admitted its own fault for previously making non-compliant gloves, boots, suits and helmet clips and acted to address those problems. SFI holds out the hope of a similar outcome regarding its pre-2009 3.2A, 3.3, 16.1 and 16.5 products, and that it will act in the best interests of the racing community without further prodding by SFI. However, admission of their fault will not change the fact that these products remain decertified and that Impact's participation in all SFI programs will end June 22, 2010.