



# ATHLETIC SHOE REGULATIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## Introduction

Over the last two years, World Athletics, led by the Working Group on Athletic Shoes and in collaboration with the World Federation for the Sporting Goods Industry, has been developing the approach for the regulation of athletic shoes. On 1 January 2022, World Athletics introduced its consolidated new set of regulations which can be found at: <https://www.worldathletics.org/about-iaaf/documents/book-of-rules>, under section 'Book C: Competition' C2.1A.

The purpose of this document is to answer frequently asked questions whether you are an athlete, official / event organiser, shoe manufacturer, or Member Federation. These Frequently Asked Questions are for guidance purposes only and do not replace the Athletic Shoe Regulations. If you have any questions or queries not covered in this document, please email to [rules@worldathletics.org](mailto:rules@worldathletics.org)

## Athletes

- **Do I need to know the make and model of my shoe?**

Yes, you need to be able to identify your competition shoe on the approved list for your event or, if the shoe was manufactured before 1 January 2016, at least know its make and model.

- **Where can I find the approved shoe list?**

Go to: <https://www.worldathletics.org/about-iaaf/documents/technical-information> and scroll to the section 'Manuals & Guidelines'. The approved list is updated on a regular basis.

- **What happens if I cannot find my shoe on the list?**

It is possible that your shoe was manufactured prior to 1 January 2016, or that the manufacturer has not submitted it for approval. In the latter case, you can email us with photographs of your shoe (including any names and/or labels) so we can contact the manufacturer.

- **What is the process for getting a shoe approved and how long does it take?**

The process diagrams in Appendices 1 & 2 set out the procedure for getting shoes approved. Depending on the application and if the shoes need to be 'physically' examined, it takes, approximately, 30 days to approve a shoe. The shoe manufacturers normally handle the process for submitting an athletic shoe for approval, because the process involves clarifications which are of a technical nature, and they are better placed to answer than an athlete.

- **Which athletes do the Regulations apply to?**

The Regulations apply to all athletes who participate in Applicable Competitions, as defined in the Athletic Shoe Regulations, as those Competitions are where World Athletics Rules and Regulations are applied in full. World Athletics' position is that the rules are not intended to cover those club, school, college or masters level competitions where the level of competition may not be relevant for international statistics purposes and where, therefore, Rules and Regulations can deviate from those in force at World Athletics.

For example, the Regulations will apply to:

- World Athletics Series Events;
- Athletics programmes of: the Olympic Games; FISU World University Games; Commonwealth Games; Various Continental or Regional Multi-Sport Games
- One-Day Athletics Meetings such as Diamond League; World Indoor Tour; Continental Tour; Combined Events Tour; Race Walking Tour; Cross-Country Tour; National Permit competitions where the results are expected to be considered for international statistics purposes
- National Championships, or any other competition where World Rankings points can be obtained.

- Selected Road Races, examples:

	Abbott WMM (Platinum)	Other WA Platinum	Other WA Label Race	Non-Label Road Race
Asia	Tokyo Marathon	Shanghai Marathon	Amazing Thailand Marathon Bangkok	Ho Chi Minh City Marathon
Europe	TCS London Marathon	Valencia Marathon	Marathon de Paris	Marathon de La Rochelle
North America, central America and Caribbean	Boston Marathon	n/a	Pittsburgh Half Marathon	Calgary Marathon
South America	n/a	n/a	Buenos Aires Marathon	Maraton de Santiago
Africa	n/a	n/a	Lagos Marathon	Eldoret City Marathon
Oceania	n/a	n/a	Sydney Marathon	Melbourne Marathon

- What is a Development Shoe and what competitions can they be worn in?**

A Development Shoe is a prototype that a shoe manufacturer would like to test in competitions before introducing them into the retail market. Shoe manufacturers provide them to their sponsored and supported athletes for testing. A Development Shoe can be worn in all Applicable Competitions except World Championships and Olympic Games, provided the manufacturer obtained a prior written approval of World Athletics and generated a QR code, but it can only be worn for a period of one year beginning from the first competition at which the shoe is worn. The manufacturer informs the athlete, and World Athletics sends the QR code to the organisers of the competition so that they can identify the shoe / athlete.

- How can I purchase a pair of shoes on the approved list?**

Athletic shoes are consumer products and, as such, the best way is to go through the manufacturers' website to purchase the shoe.

- There is a shoe I really wanted to purchase, but it's sold out. Can World Athletics get the shoe for me or have the manufacturer supply the shoe?**

As shoes are consumer products, World Athletics cannot force a manufacturer to produce further stock. This is a business decision for the manufacturer according to their costs and demands for the shoes. Athletes can wait for the shoe to be re-stocked or choose another shoe to purchase from the approved list.

- Why is there a 'Shoe Control' check and what does it involve?**

It is a new feature of the Regulations, see Regulation 14 and see Appendix 3 below.

- What happens if I am requested to go to shoe control?**

The Shoe Control Officer will simply take note of who you are, photograph your shoes and record if the shoe is on the approved list for your event or not. The purpose is to identify your shoe not to measure or examine your shoe. It is a requirement to always keep your shoes with you even after you have finished competing in case you are required to go to shoe control.

- What happens if my shoe cannot be identified at shoe control?**

It depends on the shoe you have worn. We will need to investigate further and, pending that investigation, your result will be identified as 'Uncertified' ('UNC TR5.2'). If the shoe is found to have been not approved, see Regulation 15, which may include disqualification and other sanctions.

- **Are there any circumstances where I can wear shoes (with or without spikes) above the sole thickness limits in the table?**

No. Whilst spike and non-spike shoes can be worn for the events listed in the sole thickness table, a running shoe worn on the track must comply with sole thicknesses stated in the table. For example, a 40mm road running shoe cannot be worn on the track for events from 800m above (including the Steeplechase) or one-hour track races because the limit is 25mm. This does not include Race Walking events on the track where road shoes up to 40mm in sole thicknesses can be worn provided other requirements of the Regulations are complied with.

- **I am a mountain / trail runner, how do these Regulations apply to me?**

The sole thickness table makes it clear that trail and mountain races do not have a limitation on sole thickness of shoes (although other requirements of the Regulations must be complied with). However, as these events are arranged by international Federations governing Trail and Mountain Races, you need to check if they apply the Rules to their events. Please refer to: <https://iau-ultramarathon.org/> , <https://itra.run/> and <http://wmra.ch/>

- **What’s the position regarding old shoes? Do they need to be approved?**

Below is a table showing against which shoes approvals are required.

Date	Baseline Shoe	Customised Shoe	Development Shoe
Pre-1 January 2016	Deemed approved – no need to be submitted.	Must be submitted for review and approval.	Not applicable.
1 January 2016 – 30 January 2020	Must be submitted for review and approval.	Must be submitted for review and approval.	Not applicable.
After 30 January 2020 <sup>1</sup> to present	Must be submitted for review and approval.	Must be submitted for review and approval.	As from 4 December 2020, must be submitted for review and approval.

- **Will my athletic shoe be collected post competition for further examination by an expert?**

Not necessarily, however, the Regulations provide power for Referees to ask for a shoe to be handed over for further investigation. The Shoe Control Officer carries out post competition checks to identify athletics shoes. If the shoe is collected, then they will be shipped to an Independent Expert for further investigation. This is standard procedure if you were to achieve a World Record, as it forms part of the World Record verification process.

- **What if I am an athlete who is competing in later rounds or events?**

Athletes need to ensure they have spare approved shoes that they can wear in case their first pair is collected. If you are competing in later rounds or events of the same competition, then the Referee may authorise that you keep them for these and can set further conditions concerning that.

- **If my shoe is collected, will it be cut up?**

Given the nature of the rules and restrictions regarding plates and how they are constructed within a sole, there may be no alternative way to examine other than cutting up the shoe in case of doubt. Therefore, shoes either

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<sup>1</sup> This is the date when World Athletics first updated Technical Rule 5 concerning Athletic Shoes and introduced a set of transition rules whilst the Working Group on Athletic Shoes was conducting its work.

submitted for approval or taken in at the end of a competition and sent to our Independent Expert for further examination may be cut up.

- **Will my shoe be returned?**

Yes, if the shoe is not cut up and you have requested it to be returned. You will be asked to provide contact details at the time your shoe is handed in. Otherwise, you can email to: [rules@worldathletics.org](mailto:rules@worldathletics.org) to make arrangements for the return of your shoe once it has been examined. Please note that it may take a little while to return your shoe. Where possible, we will try and return your shoe in person.

- **Can I wear bespoke or tailor-made shoes (i.e., shoes just made for me)?**

No, bespoke and tailor-made shoes are not permitted because, by definition, no other athlete is able to purchase them. One of the fundamental principles we operate under is fairness, and fairness when it comes to athletic shoes means creating a level playing field and so your shoe does need to be available for purchase by other athletes. See further in section for manufacturers below.

- **If the shoe is customised, or I need an orthotic for medical and safety reasons, do I need approval?**

Yes, you can either do this directly or, if you are a sponsored / supported athlete, through your sponsor manufacturer if they are willing to do this for you. We will need information about the medical / safety issue that is causing the problem, a supporting letter or correspondence from a medical practitioner, the model of the shoe, the changes that are required, and how the changes will prevent / support your issue. This information needs to be submitted to [rules@worldathletics.org](mailto:rules@worldathletics.org) – we do not issue clearance certificates, but will confirm in writing whether or not your request is approved.

- **Some manufacturers offer personalisation or enable me to choose my preferences (i.e., preferred upper, laces, colours, surface of the sole and design for example) of a baseline approved shoe. Do I need to get approval on the basis these are customisations?**

It depends on the type of preferences chosen. Customisation of an Existing Shoe is permitted under the Regulations (see Regulation 7). Please go through the list at Regulation 7.2 to check if any of those customisations are planned, then it is best the athlete informs us – the more the shoe is customised the increasing chance it will not be recognised and thus reported, leading to further questions. So, it is best these types of changes are notified to us. E.g., we definitely would want to know if an athlete changes the surface of the sole of the shoe, because that directly impacts sole thickness which is regulated. Otherwise, we refer to Regulation 7.3 which says changing the colour / look of the shoe is not a customisation, changing laces would not be regarded so either.

## Officials & Event Organisers

- **Do I need to arrange for shoes to be declared prior to a competition or race?**

There is no requirement to request that athletes complete shoe declarations. It is voluntary, and if you wish to do so, there is a template form in the Appendices. Athletes should, however, be reminded that they must compete in shoes in compliance with the Athletic Shoe Regulations and know the make and model of their shoe.

- **Do I need to conduct any checks in the Call Room?**

No, due to the limited time in the Call Room, it is not a requirement to conduct checks in the Call Room. Although all athletes must be reminded to keep their shoes with them once they have finished competing, because they can be subject to shoe control process after the event.

- **Who can be the Shoe Control Officer and what do they need to do?**

We have produced specific guidance about who can be the Shoe Control Officer and what they need to do. Please email to [rules@worldathletics.org](mailto:rules@worldathletics.org) to get this guidance document.

- **Does the Shoe Control Officer need to measure the sole thickness of a shoe?**

No, the purpose is to record what shoe the athlete is wearing and identify it on the approved list or otherwise. No measurements of the shoe are required.

- **The athlete has been through Shoe Control and the shoe is not on the approved list, what do we do?**

If it is not possible to identify the shoe, or if the shoe is not on the approved list, then complete the template for shoe control and send to [rules@worldathletics.org](mailto:rules@worldathletics.org) – the athlete's performance is pending verification of the shoe, and this needs to be explained to the athlete.

- **What happens if an athlete is found to have competed in a non-approved shoe?**

The result will not be valid for World Athletics Statistics purposes, however, should the official / event organiser wish to keep the recorded mark for completeness of information (or for national statistics purposes), then the result sheet should show very clearly next to the athlete's name that their result was achieved in breach of TR 5.2. Alternatively, the official / event organiser can mark the athlete as DQ, in which case no mark will be recorded at all.

- **The athlete needs to compete in later heats or other competitions, do we still need to collect their shoe?**

The Referee has a discretion to allow the athlete to compete in the shoe in subsequent rounds or heats and determine how and under what conditions.

- **Does the Shoe Control Officer need to check for inserts (e.g., orthotics)? And if there is one, do they need to mark this against the athletes' results?**

On the Shoe Check Form, there is a note to record and photograph orthotics. However, there is no further action to be taken. World Athletics will review the information, and decide next steps depending on the circumstances.

- **In what circumstances must a shoe be collected for further investigation?**

If a World Record is achieved (excluding U20 World Records). (in case of a Relay, from all four members.) Otherwise, Referees or the Shoe Control Officer may request the shoe where they believe it may not comply with the letter or spirit of the Regulations.

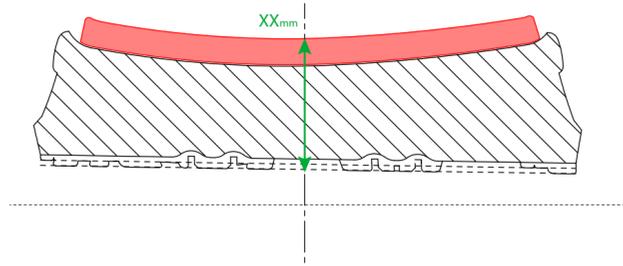
- **Does World Athletics reimburse the courier costs for sending the shoes?**

No, the costs of sending the shoes to World Athletics HQ (see 3.5 below) are to be met by the event / race organiser. World Athletics will arrange and cover the cost for the transfer of the shoes to the Independent Expert.

- **Where do we need to send shoes collected at an event to?**

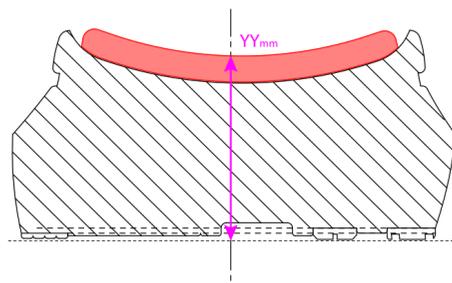
The Athletic Shoe must be sent by door-to-door courier to:

Sandrine Prokopowicz, Competition and Events Dept. World Athletics, 6-8, Quai Antoine 1er BP 359 MC 98007 Monaco Tel: +33607939993 and +37793108888. Please remember to email the courier tracking number to [rules@worldathletics.org](mailto:rules@worldathletics.org). World Athletics will co-ordinate with its Independent Expert for the transfer of the shoe to the laboratory.

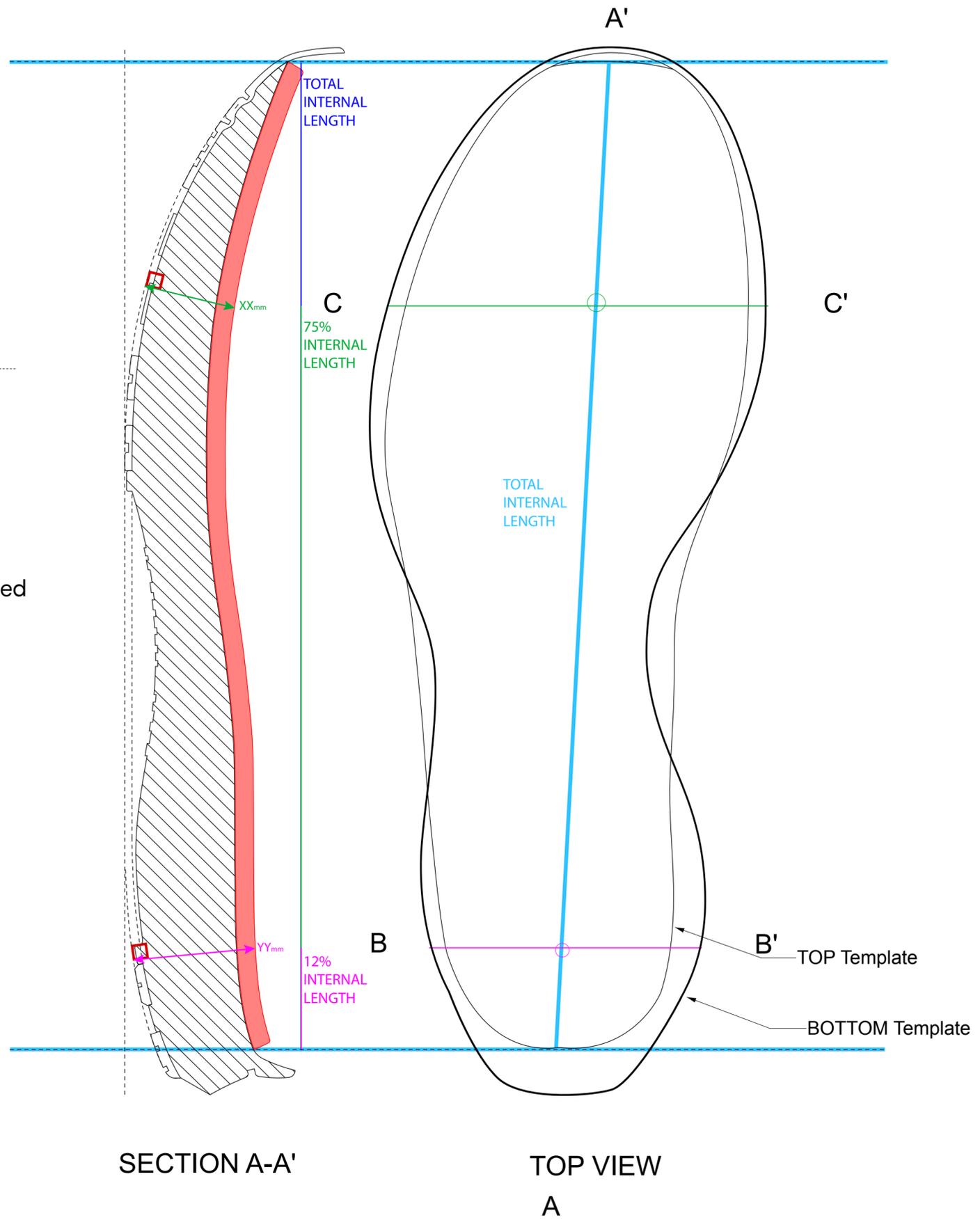


SECTION C-C'

XX and YY thicknesses should be measured at the middle of the sockliner width.



SECTION B-B'



## Shoe Manufacturers

- **Is the process of shoe approval confidential?**

Yes, we can arrange individual non-disclosure agreements – no one other than those approving the shoe gets to see individual specifications. The Independent Expert is under a contractual obligation of confidentiality.

- **How do I get a New Shoe on to the approved list?**

Complete the template specification form in the Appendix 1, attached construction diagrams and submit the documents to [rules@worldathletics.org](mailto:rules@worldathletics.org) – we will then get in touch with you if we have any further questions about your submission. If the shoe is approved, we will add the shoe to the list unless the new shoe is planned for launch at some time in the future, in which case, we will diarise to add it closer to the time.

In certain circumstances, we may require a pair of shoes to be sent to us.

- **Is it possible to discuss our ideas and plans for an initial view?**

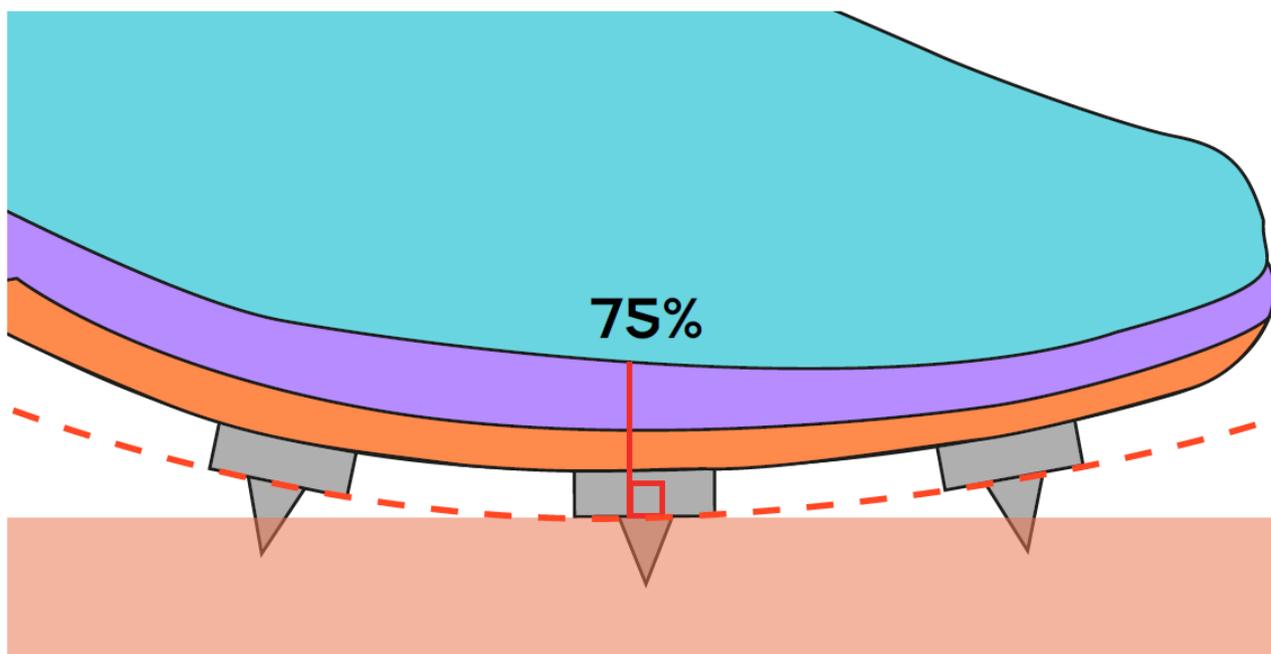
Yes, we are open to doing so, but on the basis that such discussions are without prejudice to the formal shoe approval process.

- **We wish to test a Development Shoe with our sponsored / supported athletes, how do we do this? What happens after we have finished our testing?**

Complete the template specification (see answer to 4.2 above) and the Development Shoe Form with the names and competitions at which the athletes plan to wear the shoes Appendix 4. The period within which a Development Shoe can be worn is 1 year from the first competition at which it is worn. If, during the development period the shoe specification has been altered, the manufacturer must submit a new specification form to World Athletics for approval, highlighting the change(s). Once testing is completed (whether at the end of the 1-year period or before), manufacturers must advise if they will introduce the shoe into the retail market and provide an updated specification sheet (Appendix 1) highlighting any differences between the Development Shoe specification and the final shoe specification for review and approval.

- **Where are the 12% and 75% points of the shoes measured and are they to be measured with the shoe on a flat surface. How is this achieved with spike shoes?**

Please see the diagrams below.



Please note that for spike shoes, we are paying close attention to shoes containing ‘...one additional rigid structure or other mechanism... solely to attach spikes to the outer underside of the shoe.’ As a result, we are focussing on the interaction of the spike plate with the rest of the sole, the internal rigid structure, if it has one, the length of the spike plate, the material it is made from etc. Therefore, manufacturers should expect that spike shoes with these characteristics take a little longer to approve.

- **Can you provide further examples of embedded ‘sensing or intelligent’ technology?**

It is not possible to define the technology precisely. It is technology that triggers a change in the state of the shoe e.g., its stiffness etc.

- **What’s the definition of Available to Purchase? Does it include pre-order periods?**

This is set out at paragraph 1 of Appendix 4 to the Regulations and does include pre-order periods which must be at least one month.

- **Availability of Shoes – what’s the length of time a new shoe needs to be available for and where does it need to be available?**

The duration for both road and spikes shoes is 1 month before the new shoe is first worn in an Applicable Competition.

- **What happens with an Existing Shoe which is no longer sold or a New Shoe which is sold out?**

Appendix 4 of the Regulations state that the availability of shoes is subject to stock. There is no requirement for a manufacturer / retailer to re-stock a shoe once it is sold out.

- **We are having supply chain issues due to issues outside of our control which is causing our shoes to be delayed in getting to market, what can we do?**

Contact World Athletics, and raise the issue also with WFSGI as it is possible other manufacturers are facing the same issues. World Athletics will assess the situation and respond accordingly.

- **We're not planning to launch this shoe until sometime later, can the shoe still go on the approved list now?**

No, unless the shoe has been approved as a Development Shoe, then World Athletics will diarise to add the shoe to the approved list at the time of its launch. Until it is launched, the shoe cannot be worn in Applicable Competitions.

## Appendix 1 - Template Specification Form

MANUFACTURER NAME: **AZERTY**

SHOE NAME AND REFERENCE: **BUG / ERROR 404**

AVAILABILITY **Planned retail release zz/yy/2020 on xxxxxx.com**

TYPE OF SHOE: **Spiked Footwear/Road/other (please specify the shoe type and the discipline the shoe is intended for)**

CONSTRUCTION BLUEPRINT and DIAGRAMS: You **MUST** attach the shoe blueprint **and** at least one diagram clearly indicating the cross sections of the sole and clearly identifying any rigid structure in the sole (e.g., plate, blade etc.)

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SHOE: Please insert **one side photograph** of the shoe **and** **one photograph from underneath**



### GENERAL

Shoe Size (EUR 42 or as close as possible to size EUR 42):

Weight (g):

Max Length (**external**) (mm):

Max Length (**internal**) (mm):

Overall max thickness: (mm):

Where (**as % of internal length**) is the overall max thickness:

### MIDSOLE

Number of layers (including any rigid structure (e.g., plate, blade etc.):

Composition of layer(s) **centre rearfoot**:

Composition of layer(s) **centre forefoot**:

### OUTSOLE

Number of layers **rearfoot** (including any rigid structure (e.g., plate, blade etc.):

Number of layers **forefoot** (including any rigid structure (e.g., plate, blade etc.):

Composition of layer(s):

### TOTAL COMBINED THICKNESS OF THE SOLE (INCLUDING SOCKLINER)

Total thickness according to Regulation 10 at 12% (mm):

Total thickness according to Regulation 10 at 75% (mm):

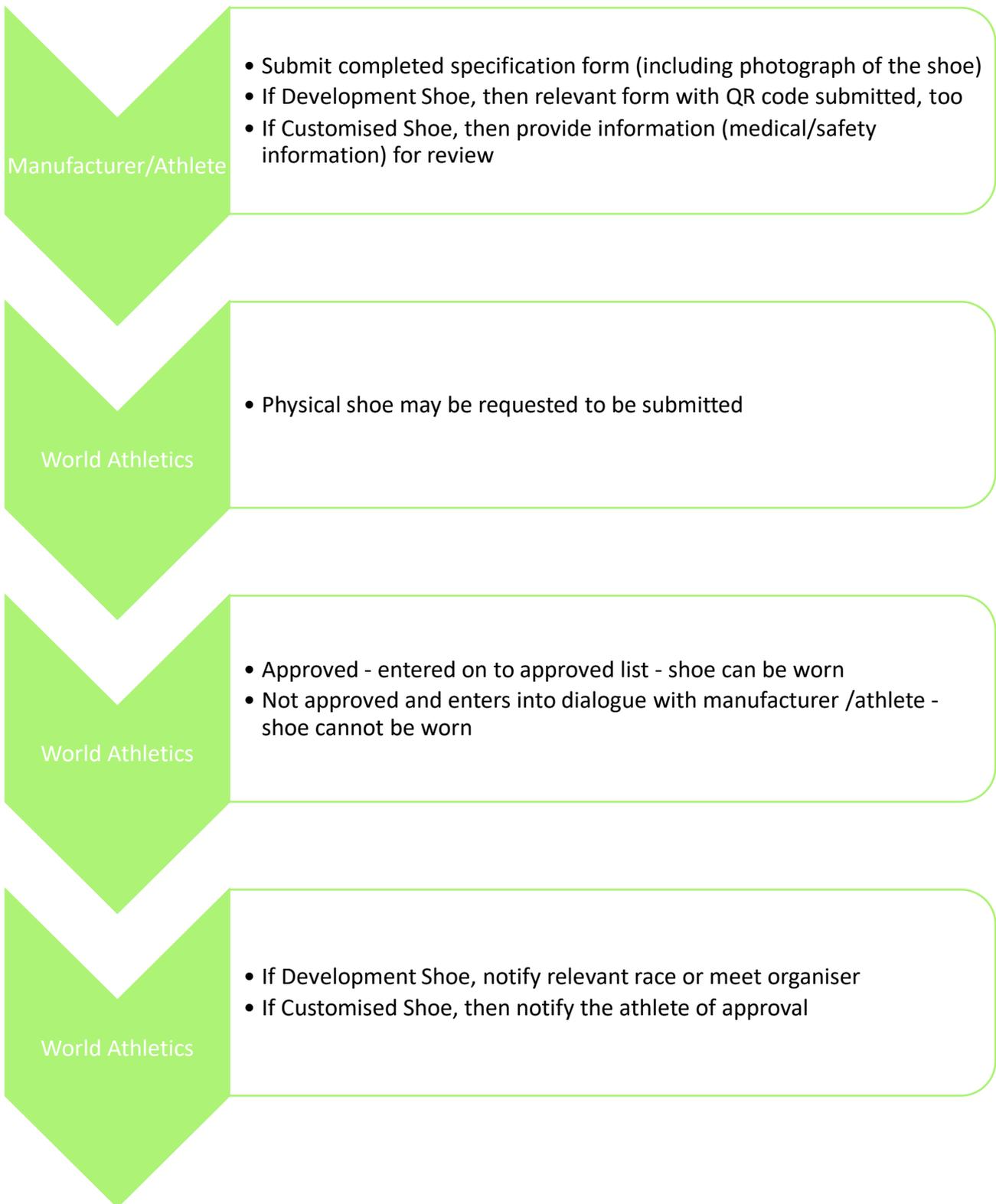
### FOR SHOE WITH RIGID STRUCTURE(S) PLEASE SPECIFY (SEE REGULATION 10.6):

- Is the rigid structure (e.g., plate, blade etc.) the **full length**?
- Is the rigid structure (e.g., plate, blade etc.) **part of the length** of the shoe? If so, which part?
- If the rigid structure (e.g., plate, blade etc.) **is in more than one part**, please confirm that these parts are in one plane (i.e., must not be stacked above each other or overlap)

- For a spike shoe, is there is an additional rigid structure or other mechanism (e.g., plate, blade etc.) solely to attach spikes to the outer underside of the shoe (please refer to Regulation 10.6.3)?

## Appendix 2 - Approvals Process

For all shoes (including Development Shoes and requests for customisation), aim to take approximately 30 days from submission to World Athletics.



## Appendix 3 - Shoe Control Check

For all events.

For World Athletics Series Events, World Athletics will arrange for the Shoe Control Officer.



## Appendix 4 - Development Shoe Form



For **each Development Shoe**, the company **must generate and insert here a QR Code** which contains the below information:

**COMPANY NAME:** to be filled by the company

**DEVELOPMENT SHOE MODEL:** to be filled by the company

**12-MONTH DEVELOPMENT PERIOD (starting from first competition the shoe is worn):**

- Start Date:       xx/xx/xxxx
- End Date:         xx/xx/xxxx

Please fill, in the below table, on the left column athlete information and on the first line, competitions during which these athletes will use the above referenced Development Shoe.

Athlete first and last name	Competition Name, date, Location							

By signing, the manufacturer undertakes to respect the World Athletics Development Shoe approval process and confirms that their supported/sponsored athletes named in this form have been consulted and advised on the rules, process and requirements concerning wearing Development Shoes. All information provided to World Athletics by the manufacturer will be strictly for use during the Development Shoe and will remain confidential. The manufacturer declares that the signatories below are duly individually or collectively authorised to sign on behalf of the manufacturer.

**Date:**

**Name and Signature:**