



ATHLETIC SHOE REGULATIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Introduction

Over the last 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.

Athletes

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

Yes, you need to be able to identify your competition shoe on the List of Approved Athletic Shoes for your event or, if the shoe was manufactured before 1 January 2016, to know its brand and model name and to be able to prove that it was already available before 1 January 2016. It is your responsibility to make sure you are wearing an approved shoe.

- **Where can I find the List of Approved Athletic Shoes?**

The List of Approved Athletic Shoes is available at <https://certcheck.worldathletics.org>. It is updated with every shoe being approved.

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

In most cases, the shoe is currently not approved, either because the manufacturer has not submitted an application for it, or because the application is still ongoing or because the shoe is not compliant. In these cases, you may not wear the shoe in any World Rankings Competitions.

It might also be possible that the shoe was manufactured prior to 1 January 2016, in which case it is deemed to be compliant. However, in this case, it is your responsibility to provide a proof that it was already available before 1 January 2016.

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

The process diagrams in Appendices 1 & 2 of the Athletic Shoe Regulations set out the procedure and timelines for getting shoes approved. The shoe manufacturers normally handle the process for submitting an athletic shoe for approval because the process involves the provision of technical details which usually only the manufacturer has.

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

The Regulations apply to all athletes who participate in World Rankings Competitions. 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 statistical purposes and where, therefore, Rules and Regulations may 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
- Invitation 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 statistical 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 World Rankings Competitions except World Series Events and Olympic Games, provided the shoe is listed on the List of Approved Athletic Shoes for that specific event.

- How can I purchase a pair of shoes on the List of Approved Athletic Shoes?**

Athletic shoes are consumer products and, as such, the best way is to go through any official sales channel including the manufacturer's 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 to 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 List of Approved Athletic Shoes.

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

Details about Shoe Control are provided in Regulation 14 of the Athletic Shoe Regulations, in the Shoe Control Guidelines and in Appendix 2 below.

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

The Shoe Control Officer will simply take note of who you are, may photograph your shoes and record if they are on the List of Approved Athletic Shoes for your event or not. The purpose is to identify your shoe not to measure or examine it. However, your shoe might be collected and sent to World Athletics for further examination by an Independent Expert, which may include the shoe to be cut.

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 or is not approved?**

The potential consequences and sanctions are defined in the Athletic Shoe Regulations, in particular in Regulation 14 and 15, and may include the result to be classified as ‘Uncertified’ (‘UNC TR5.2’) or the athlete to be disqualified and the performance to be declared invalid with all resulting consequences.

- **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 which Rules apply 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 for which shoes approvals are required.

| Date | Baseline Shoe | Customised Shoe | Development Shoe |
|---|--|--|--|
| Pre-1 January 2016 | Deemed approved – no need to be submitted. (But proof of the existence before 1 January 2016 must be available.) | 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 ¹ to present | Must be submitted for review and approval. | Must be submitted for review and approval. | must be submitted for review and approval. |

If a manufacturer updates an Existing Shoe from before 1 January 2016 (except for a pure change of the colourway), it is no longer considered as an Existing Shoe and must thus be submitted for review and approval, too.

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

Not necessarily, however, the Regulations provide power to Referees and Shoe Control Officers to ask athletes to provide their shoes for further examination. If the shoe is collected, then they will be shipped to an Independent Expert for further investigation (which may include the shoe to be cut). 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.

¹ 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.

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

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 the shoe in case of doubt. Therefore, shoes either submitted for approval or taken in at the end of a competition and sent to the Independent Expert for further examination may be cut.

- **Will my shoe be returned?**

Yes, if you have requested it to be returned. You will be asked to provide contact details at the time your shoe is collected. Please note that it may take a little while to return your shoe. Where possible, we will try to 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 under the Athletic Shoe Regulations.

- **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 – 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 since these are considered customisations?**

It depends on the type of personalisation, as some changes do indeed need an approval (like any change to the construction of the sole), while other changes do not need an approval (like a mere change of the colour). Please refer to Regulation 7 of the Athletic Shoe Regulations for more details about customisation.

Officials & Event Organisers

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

There is no requirement for you to request that athletes complete shoe declarations. It is voluntary, and if you wish to do so, there is a template form available on the website. Athletes should, however, be reminded that they must compete in shoes in compliance with the Athletic Shoe Regulations and know the brand and model of their shoe. If declarations are used, they have to be checked against the List of Approved Athletic Shoes.

- **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. However, all athletes must be reminded to keep their shoes with them once they have finished competing, because they may be subject to shoe control after the event.

- **How should Shoe Control be done?**

Please refer to the Shoe Control Guidelines available on the website.

- **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 List of Approved Athletic Shoes. No measurements of the shoes are required on site.

- **The athlete has been through Shoe Control and the shoe is not on the List of Approved Athletic Shoes, what do we do?**

The required steps are described in the Shoe Control Guidelines.

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

Consequences and sanctions are defined in the Athletic Shoe Regulations. They may include the athlete to be disqualified and the performance to be declared invalid with all resulting consequences.

- **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 (e.g. mark the shoe and collect it after the next round).

- **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 the shoe must be collected (in case of a Relay, from all four members) and sent to World Athletics. However, collecting the shoes is not required for U20 World Records. Otherwise, Referees or the Shoe Control Officer may collect 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 address below) are to be met by the event organiser / race organiser. World Athletics will arrange and cover the costs for the transfer of the shoes to the Independent Expert.

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

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

World Athletics, Sandrine Prokopowicz, Competition and Events Department, 6-8, Quai Antoine 1er, BP 359, MC 98007, Monaco (Tel: +33607939993 or +37793108888).

Please remember to email the courier tracking number to rules@worldathletics.org. World Athletics will coordinate the transfer of the shoes to the Independent Expert.

Shoe Manufacturers

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

Yes. We can arrange individual non-disclosure agreements if needed. The Independent Expert is under a contractual obligation of confidentiality.

- **How do I get a New Shoe on to the List of Approved Athletic Shoes?**

To get a New Shoe on to the List of Approved Athletic Shoes, an application (including the provision of the required technical information and pictures of the shoe) must be submitted via an online platform. Please send an email to rules@worldathletics.org if you need to create an account for the very first time.

The application process may require a sample of the shoe to be sent to World Athletics for further examination by the Independent Expert.

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

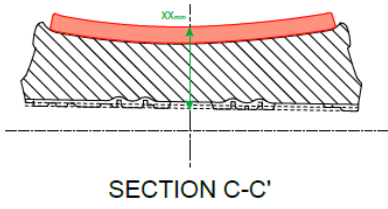
Yes, we are open to doing so, but on the basis that such discussions are without prejudice to the formal shoe approval process.

- **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?**

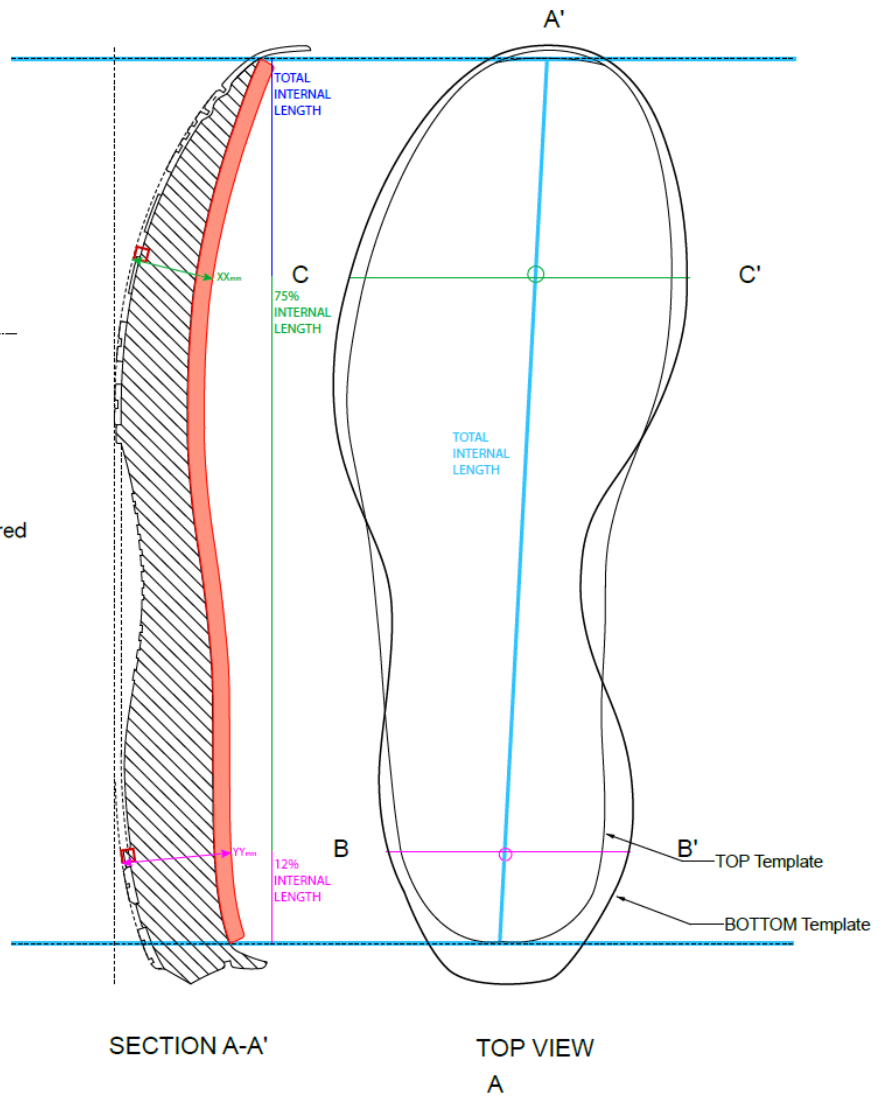
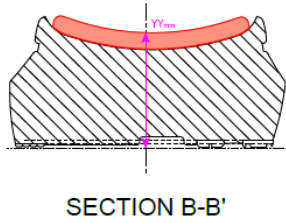
The formal application process is the same as for New Shoes: An application (including the provision of the required technical information and pictures of the shoe) must be submitted via the online platform. The period within which a Development Shoe can be worn is 1 year and clearly indicated on the List of Approved Athletic Shoes. If, during that period, the shoe specification is altered, a new application has to be submitted. Once testing is completed (whether at the end of the 1-year period or before), manufacturers may decide to introduce the shoe into the retail market. In this case, an application for a New Shoe must be submitted including the details and specifications of the final version that actually goes to the market.

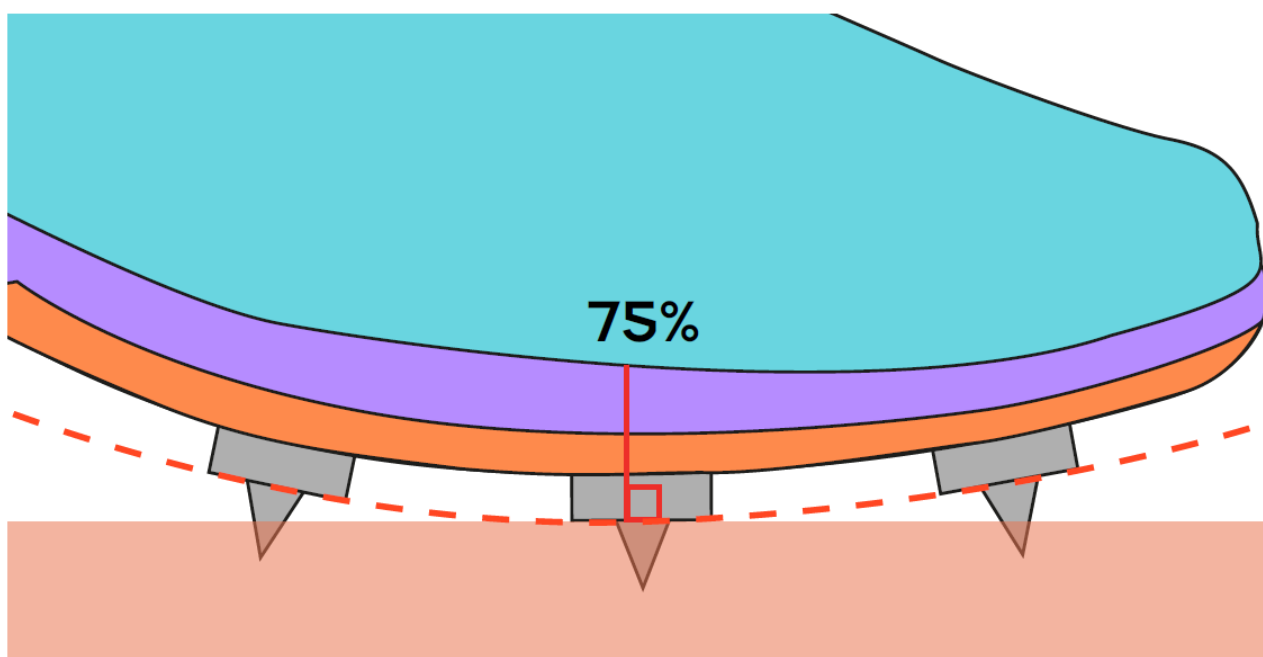
- **Where are the 12% and 75% points of the shoes measured and are they to be measured with the shoe on a flat surface? How is this achieved with spike shoes?**

Please see the diagrams below.



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





Please note that for spike shoes, close attention is paid 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. However, it is technology that triggers a change in the state of the shoe e.g., its stiffness etc.

- **What’s the definition of ‘Available for Purchase’?**

This is set out in Appendix 4 of the Athletic Shoe Regulations.

- **Availability of Shoes – what’s the length of time a New Shoe needs to be Available for Purchase?**

New Shoes must be Available for Purchase at least one month before they can be worn in World Rankings Competitions.

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

Appendix 4 of the Athletic Shoe 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?**

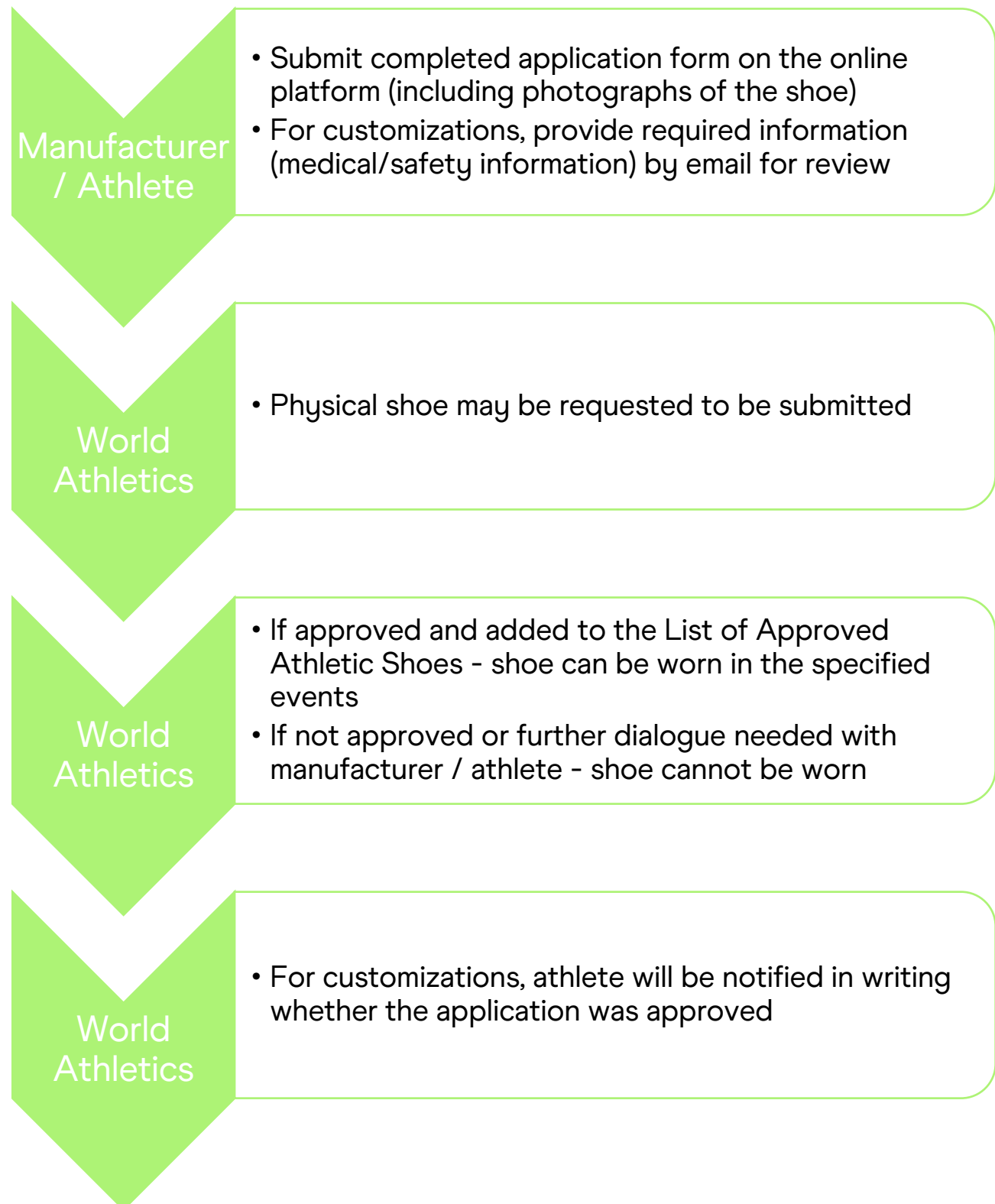
Contact World Athletics, and raise the issue also with WFSGI as it is possible that other manufacturers are facing the same issues. World Athletics will assess the situation and respond accordingly.

- **We're not planning to launch a specific shoe until sometime later, can we still get an approval for this shoe now?**

You can submit an application and get the confirmation that the shoe complies from a technical point of view, but the shoe will not be shown as being approved on the List of Approved Athletic Shoes, i.e. the shoe cannot be worn in World Rankings Competitions at this point in time. However, once the shoe is finally released and Available for Purchase for one month, it will show on the List of Approved Athletic Shoes as being approved.

Appendix 1 - Approval Process

World Athletics will use reasonable efforts to complete the approval process as soon as practicable (if possible, within 30 days of receipt of the shoe by the Independent Expert). However, the specific timeline will depend on several factors with some of them being out of the control of World Athletics (e.g. missing information in the application, delays in the shipment of the sample etc.)



Appendix 2 - Shoe Control Check (see also Shoe Control Guidelines)

For all events.

(For World Athletics Series Events, World Athletics will appoint the Shoe Control Officer.)

