



## Standardized Equipment List

The InterAgency Board for Emergency Preparedness & Response (IAB) is a voluntary collaborative panel of emergency preparedness and response practitioners, representing all levels of government and operational, technical, and support organizations. The IAB provides a structured forum where stakeholders can exchange ideas to improve the nation's ability to prepare for and respond safely to emergencies, disasters, and other critical incidents. The IAB publishes multidisciplinary best practices and recommendations that are disseminated throughout the emergency response community.

The manufacturers and third-party sellers of emergency response equipment compete in a crowded marketplace. Vendor-provided information on emergency response equipment may be accurate or inaccurate, one-sided, incomplete, confusing or misleading. The IAB is providing this guidance to inform purchasers of the importance of procuring equipment that meets standards and the methods available for identifying them. This guidance is specific to the procurement of equipment listed on the IAB Standardized Equipment List (SEL), which contains nearly 800 items recommended to local, tribal, state, and federal government organizations in preparing for and responding to incidents.

The intended audience includes personnel responsible for procuring equipment for use by military, law enforcement, corrections, fire, and public health personnel; however, it may also be useful to other individuals or organizations, such as public works. This document is not intended to teach the procurement process or to preclude federal, state, tribal, local, or other established processes for equipment procurement or procured equipment training. Rather, it is intended to supplement those processes by answering the following questions and thereby providing a basic understanding of the application of standards in procurement.

- *What is a standard, and why is it important to my organization?*

For the purposes of this guide, the term “standard” is defined as a document that provides requirements, specifications, guidelines, or characteristics that individuals can use to consistently ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose. There are several categories or types of standards; the focus of this document is on performance standards, product standards, performance specifications, design specifications, and test methods.

Standards are critical in procurement because they promote understanding between buyer and seller and facilitate mutually beneficial commercial transactions. Individual purchasers cannot always evaluate product attributes by merely looking at the product or even from prior experience. In many marketplaces, buyers are unable to make competent judgments without assistance regarding product characteristics and performance.

A product's conformance to accepted standards readily provides an efficient method of conveying complex information on the product's suitability. Procurement agents can use standards as an easy way of communicating their needs to potential suppliers.<sup>1</sup> Standards help purchasers to compare what is offered against what is required.

- *Are there different types of standards?*

There are many types of standards, and providing a comprehensive list is not feasible or necessary here. A limited list of relevant types of standards is included, and for the purposes of this document, the standards are categorized as either product standards, test methods, or other standards. Product standards and test methods are of particular interest because they can be used within purchase specifications to help ensure that a product meets minimum requirements.

1. **Product Standard:** Product standards typically specify performance requirements a product must meet and often include test methods by which performance may be evaluated. Other names for product standards are listed below:
  - Mandatory standard
  - Performance standard
  - Performance specification
  - Specification
2. **Test Method:** A test method describes one or more exact procedures for assessing an attribute, characteristic, or quality and produces a test result(s).
3. **Other Standards:** There are other standards such as those listed below, which are not addressed within this guidance:
  - Best practice
  - Guidance
  - Guide
  - Guideline
  - Practice
  - Recommendation
  - Code

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<sup>1</sup> Breitenberg, M. A. (2009). *The ABCs of Standards Activities* (NISTIR 7614). Gaithersburg, MD: National Institute of Standards and Technology.

- *What is the benefit of the IAB Standardized Equipment List (SEL)?*

The SEL provides a list of generic equipment that the IAB recommends to local, state, and federal government organizations for use in preparing for and responding to all-hazards events. The SEL specifies equipment types to promote interoperability and standardization across the response community; the SEL does not specify or promote brand names of equipment.

The SEL is aligned with the Authorized Equipment List (AEL) produced by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate. The AEL is the equipment purchase grant guidance for several major Department of Homeland Security grant programs. The purpose of aligning the SEL and AEL is to enable the responder community to easily obtain equipment information from the SEL with a link to the respective grant guidance from the AEL.

The SEL is maintained online at [www.interagencyboard.org/SEL](http://www.interagencyboard.org/SEL), and each online record includes the date and time of its most recent change. Local, tribal, state, or federal government organizations may suggest changes to the SEL at any time.

- *How can I tell if there is a standard for the equipment I need to procure?*

The Standardized Equipment List (SEL) described above can help. The SEL lists many types of responder equipment and provides information on relevant standards. The SEL may be accessed at <http://interagencyboard.org/SEL>.

Two additional resources for finding relevant standards are available at the following websites:

1. American National Standards Institute search engine for standards at <https://webstore.ansi.org/>
2. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) at <https://www.nist.gov/standardsgov/learn-how-find-standards>.
3. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Personal Protective Equipment Information at <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/PPEInfo/>.

- *If there is a standard for the equipment I need, how can I verify that a product meets the standard? (A similar question is, "A manufacturer claims that its product meets a standard, but how can I know for sure?")*

There are various methods for determining whether a product meets a standard, ranging from a supplier's declaration of conformity to an independent third-party certification. The process of determining whether a product has met a standard is known as conformity assessment. For each item on the IAB SEL, relevant standards are listed when available. Appendix A provides language related to the application of standards within purchase

specifications, so that a purchaser can cut-and-paste the language into a purchase specification. The IAB recommends this or similar language be included in purchase specifications to ensure that the purchased equipment meets relevant standards.

- *Is there someone who can help answer questions that I have?*

Questions regarding the SEL and standards may be submitted to the IAB at [info@interagencyboard.us](mailto:info@interagencyboard.us).

You may ask NIST for assistance by using the form provided at the bottom of this webpage: <https://www.nist.gov/about-nist/contact-us>.

Additional resources related to procurement are available from the National Association of State Procurement Officials at [www.naspo.org](http://www.naspo.org).

## APPENDIX A. PROCUREMENT GUIDANCE FOR SEL ITEMS

The IAB recognizes that many purchasers may not understand how to apply or reference standards within purchase specifications. The availability of standards determines the purchaser's options. Therefore, the IAB developed procurement guidance to provide purchasers with language that they may insert into purchase specifications when purchasing items listed on the SEL.

Five scenarios and associated procurement language recommendations are listed below and differ based on the availability and type of standard. Several of the recommendations refer to ISO/IEC standards that are relevant. Information on these standards and their content may be found at [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org); however, it is not necessary to fully understand the content to successfully use the standards within purchase specifications.

- **Scenario 1:** No standard is available, and none is needed because the product is low-dollar, simple, or covered by regulations or codes.

**Recommendation:** No language related to standards is needed within the purchase specification.

- **Scenario 2:** No standard(s) is available for the product.

**Recommendation:** The IAB recommends the purchaser include the following two requirements as part of the purchase specification:

1. *The supplier shall provide a Supplier's Declaration of Conformity conforming to International Organization for Standardization/ International Electrotechnical Commission (ISO/IEC) 17050-1.*
2. *The supplier shall provide supporting documentation conforming to ISO/IEC 17050-2, including a test report based on testing to verify supplier claims; the testing may be performed by any competent laboratory, including a supplier's laboratory.*

- **Scenario 3:** A product standard or standard test method is available for the product.

**Recommendation:** The IAB recommends the purchaser include the following two requirements as part of the purchase specification:

1. *The supplier shall provide a Supplier's Declaration of Conformity conforming to International Organization for Standardization/ International Electrotechnical Commission (ISO/IEC) 17050-1.*
2. *The supplier shall provide supporting documentation conforming to ISO/IEC 17050-2, including identification of the applicable standard and a test report based on testing to the standard.*

There are three alternatives for laboratory requirements to be included in the specification depending on the availability of suitable laboratories. One of the options below should be appended to item 2 above:

- a. *The testing shall be performed by a competent third-party laboratory accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 for the required tests.*
  - b. *The testing shall be performed by any competent third-party laboratory.*
  - c. *The testing shall be performed by any competent laboratory, including a supplier's laboratory.*
- **Scenario 4:** An authoritative body maintains a registry of approved products that have been demonstrated to meet one or more standards.

**Recommendation:** The IAB recommends the purchaser include the following two requirements as part of the purchase specification:

1. *The supplier shall identify the authoritative body maintaining a registry of approved products and the relevant standard(s) upon which the listing is based. The supplier shall also provide documentation or other evidence that the product is listed on the registry of approved products maintained by that authoritative body. The evidence shall include an agreement between the authoritative body and the supplier stating the requirements for listing.*
2. *The supplier shall provide the test report upon which the listing is based.*

**Note:** The purchaser may also require the supplier to provide a Supplier's Declaration of Conformity conforming to ISO/IEC 17050-1.

- **Scenario 5:** The product is certified to one or more standards.

**Recommendation:** The IAB recommends the purchaser include the following requirement as part of the purchase specification:

*The supplier shall provide documentation or other evidence that the product is listed by a Certification Body accredited to International Organization for Standardization/International Electrotechnical Commission (ISO/IEC) 17065.*

- **Special Case Scenarios:** There are two special cases of SEL items for which specific procurement guidance was developed:
  - **National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Body Armor:** NIJ-recommended sample procurement language is available in Appendix E of the *Selection and Application Guide 0101.06 to Ballistic Resistant Body Armor*, which is available at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/247281.pdf>.

**Recommendation:** The IAB recommends the purchaser include at least the following requirement as part of the purchase specification:

*The supplier shall provide the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) compliance letter documenting that the product is listed on the most recent NIJ Ballistic Armor Compliant Products List (CPL), which may be found at [https://www.justnet.org/other/ballistic\\_cpl.html](https://www.justnet.org/other/ballistic_cpl.html).*

○ **NIOSH Respirators:**

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the purchaser include at least the following requirement as part of the purchase specification:

*The supplier shall provide documentation or other evidence that the product is NIOSH-approved and listed on the most recent National Personal Protection Technology Laboratory certified equipment list, which may be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/cel/>.*