Overview

About the RKB

The Responder Knowledge Base (RKB) is designed to provide emergency responders with a "first stop" for integrated information on standards, certifications, training, grants, and available responder-related equipment, including organizing lists such as the InterAgency Board's (IAB) Standardized Equipment List (SEL), and the Authorized Equipment List (AEL) from the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate (GPD).

The RKB provides knowledge links, user opinions, and hints authored by subject matter experts. By integrating this information into one location, the RKB has become a "go-to" site for the responder community to begin answering questions such as:

- What equipment is out there? (including searches using the SEL and AEL)
- Has it been certified?
- To what standard?
- What training is needed to use the equipment?
- How do I pay for it?
- Whom can I talk to that has used the equipment?

Equipment vendors, testing agencies, standards organizations and training organizations are supporting the RKB by populating it with current data. There is no charge to them for posting their data, and no charge to the responder community for accessing it. The RKB is provided as a public service, and has been online since October 2003.

Funding

The RKB is funded by the **DHS FEMA National Preparedness Directorate**.

Mission Statement

The RKB Mission is "to provide emergency responders, purchasers, and planners with a trusted, integrated, on-line source of information on products, standards, certifications, grants, and other equipment-related information."

RKB Content

The RKB has been designed and constructed specifically to serve the needs of emergency responders. Partners, vendors and RKB staff are constantly submitting and updating content to, and throughout the site. This content is rigorously screened by RKB staff for validity, and to ensure that it is related to the first responder mission. Once completed, the RKB staff then posts the information to the site where it can be easily viewed and searched by RKB users.

The types of content listed on the site cover a broad range of topics and information, such as:

- Grants and Assistance Programs
- AEL Items
- SEL Items
- Decontamination Products
- Detection Products
- Medical Products
- PPE Products
- Operational and US&R Products
- Communications Products
- Information Technology Products
- Operational Assessments
- LLIS (Lessons Learned) Documents
- System Assessment and Validation for Emergency Responders (SAVER) Program Documents
- Training
- Publications and References
- Certifications
- Standards
- Hints
- Mission Critical Hints
- Current Industry/Government News Items and Releases

RKB Partners

The RKB currently has 11 strategic partnerships. The RKB gratefully acknowledges the support and information that these partners share with the RKB. To request a strategic partnership, please contact the RKB. Contact information can be found in this tutorial in the *Contact Us* section.

The InterAgency Board

The National Bomb Squad Commanders Advisory Board

The National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians, Inc.

International Association of Chiefs of Police

The National Sheriffs' Association

National Tactical Officers Association

The International Association of Fire Fighters

International Association of Fire Chiefs

International Association of Emergency Managers

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

The International Safety Equipment Association

RKB Contact Information

There are several methods for RKB users to contact RKB staff with questions, concerns, or issues regarding the RKB.

The first method would be to contact the RKB by telephone via the helpdesk, Monday-Friday 8am-5pm EST, at 1-877-FEMA-RKB (1-877-336-2752).

A second option would be to contact the RKB by email at RKBMailbox@us.saic.com

Another avenue would be through the **Ask an Expert** feature in the RKB. This feature can be accessed on any record page in the green menu bar in the upper right-hand side. The **Ask an Expert** feature is for users with general questions about equipment, certifications, standards, or other related topics that are not answered by the content of the website. The RKB has a network of Subject Matter Experts who are available to attempt to provide answers to these questions. This feature is further covered in *Additional Features - Ask an Expert* of this tutorial.

Within the **Ask an Expert** record page, there is an option for a user to provide feedback to the RKB staff. **Feedback** is checked daily by the RKB staff and replies will be sent regarding the feedback where applicable. **Feedback** is also further explained in *Additional Features – Feedback* of this tutorial.

Searching the RKB

Types of Searches

There are two main ways to search for information in the RKB. The first method would be to conduct a **Keyword Search** which searches the content of the entire RKB site. The second method is to use the links in the gray tabs on the top navigation bar to go to the specific content section and conduct a search within that specific section. The following sections in this tutorial will go into greater detail on how to perform these searches.

1 **Gray Navigation Bar:**
Use the navigation bar to go to a specific content section and conduct a search within that specific section

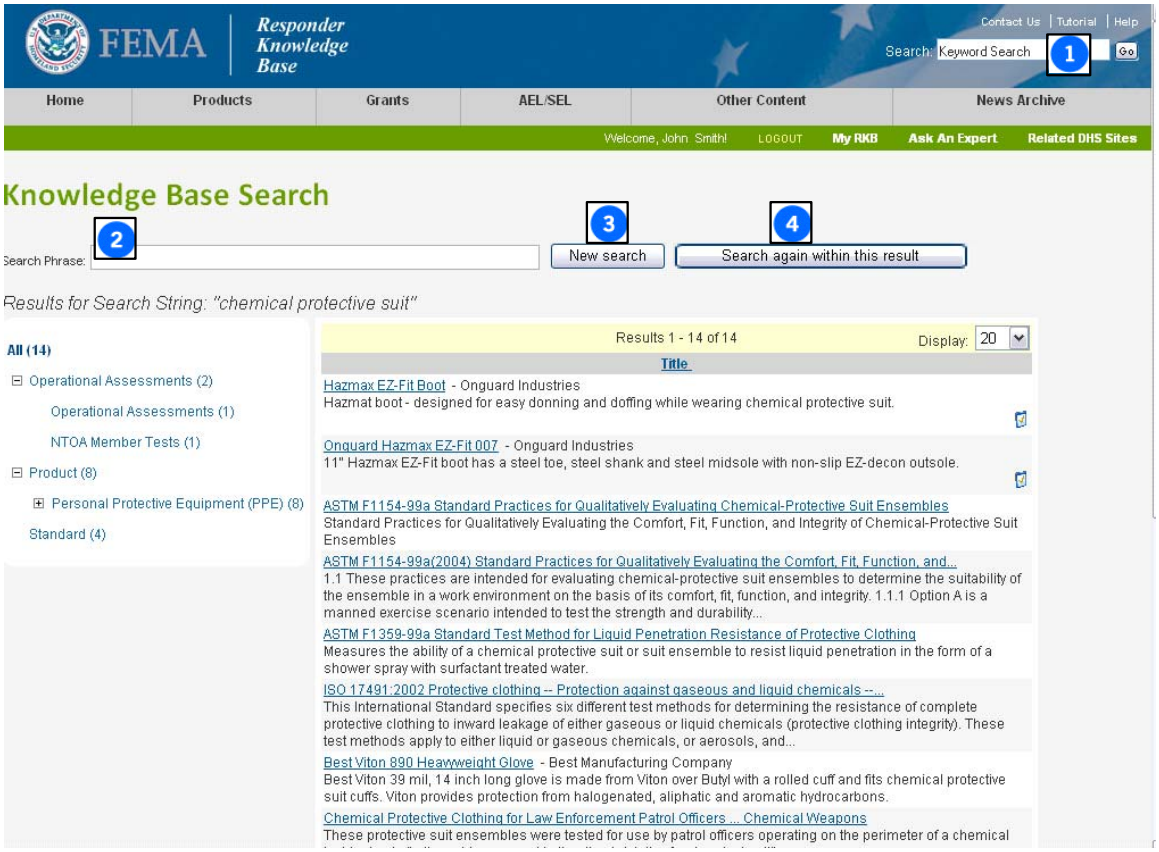
2 **Keyword Search:**
Enter desired search information here and click on the **Go** button to start the RKB system-wide search.

Keyword Search

The **Keyword Search** allows a user the ability to search any word or phrase that they would like to find related information on in the RKB. When searching in this feature, the RKB will then display all records where that word or phrase appears in the search results. There are also some tricks below that will generate the highest quality results.

Here are a couple of helpful search rules:

- When searching for a specific phrase, like *chemical protective suit*, the search feature is set to pull any record page in the RKB where these three words are listed together in this exact order.
- When conducting a search, again using *chemical protective suit* as an example, and looking for any record that contains these three words, there are two ways to arrive at this result. The first method for conducting this type of search would be to click on the **Tip: To search for individual words click here** link when conducting the exact word/exact order search described in the first bullet above. The second method would be to type *or* between each of the search words, for example *chemical or protective or suit*. The search results for both of these methods will pull any record that contains any of the words in any combination or order.
- For any of the above search methods, the RKB has the ability to narrow the search results further. For example, if a search is conducted for *chemical protective suit,* the search can be refined further by searching for records also containing information related to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Searching for *NFPA* in the **Search Phrase** box and then by clicking on the button for **Search again within this result** will further narrow the results returned.



1 **Keyword Search:** Enter desired search information here and click on the **Go** button to start the RKB system-wide search.

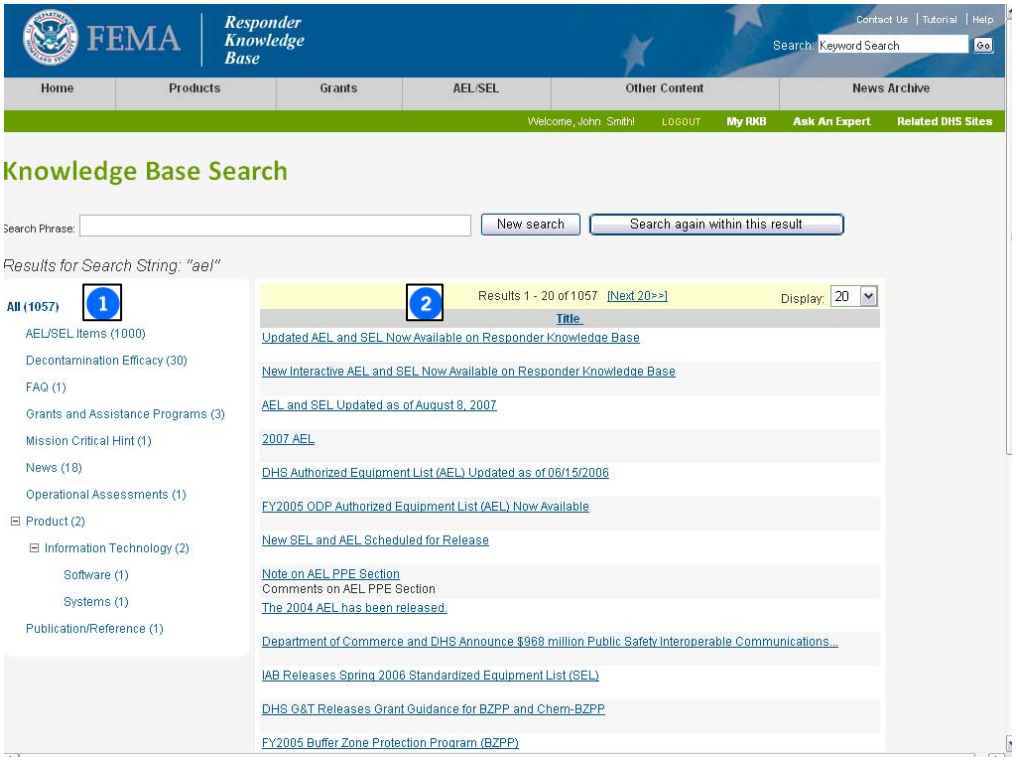
2 **Search Phrase Box:** Enter desired search word(s) in this box to refine search using the **Search again within this result** button, or start a new search by clicking on the button of the same name.

3 **"New Search" Button:** Enter desired search information in the **Search Phrase Box** and then click on this button to begin a new search.

4 **"Search again within this result" Button:** Enter desired search information in the **Search Phrase Box** and then click on this button to further refine the current search.

Understanding the Search Results

When conducting a **Keyword Search**, often there will be related results returned from multiple types of RKB content such as AEL/SEL items, grants, products, standards, publications, etc. On the Search Results Page, categories of results are displayed on the left in the navigation tree and the individual items on the right in the results area. For example, by searching the keyword "AEL", the results will look like the screen below:



1 **Category Navigation Tree:**
This navigation tree gives the user the ability to look at categories of specific areas of interest. When selected, only results that are under the selected category or subcategory will be displayed in the results area.

2 **Results Area:**
This shows a listing of all the products that are related to the search that was conducted.

Item #1, highlighted above, is the navigation tree on the left side of the screen. This tree can be expanded to view related records that fall under the keyword search that was conducted. For example, by clicking on the ⊞ next to the **Products** category it will expand the navigation tree to reveal subcategories that fall within the **Products** category. Once expanded, it will change the ⊞ symbol to a ⊟, which allows the navigation tree to be collapsed.

By clicking on a category, only those items that fall under that category will be shown in the results area (#2 above). Clicking on the items in the results area will pull up the record page for that item. Understanding the format and content of the individual record pages that are generated when selecting a specific product, or any RKB content item for that matter, is discussed later in the tutorial in the *Viewing Content* section.

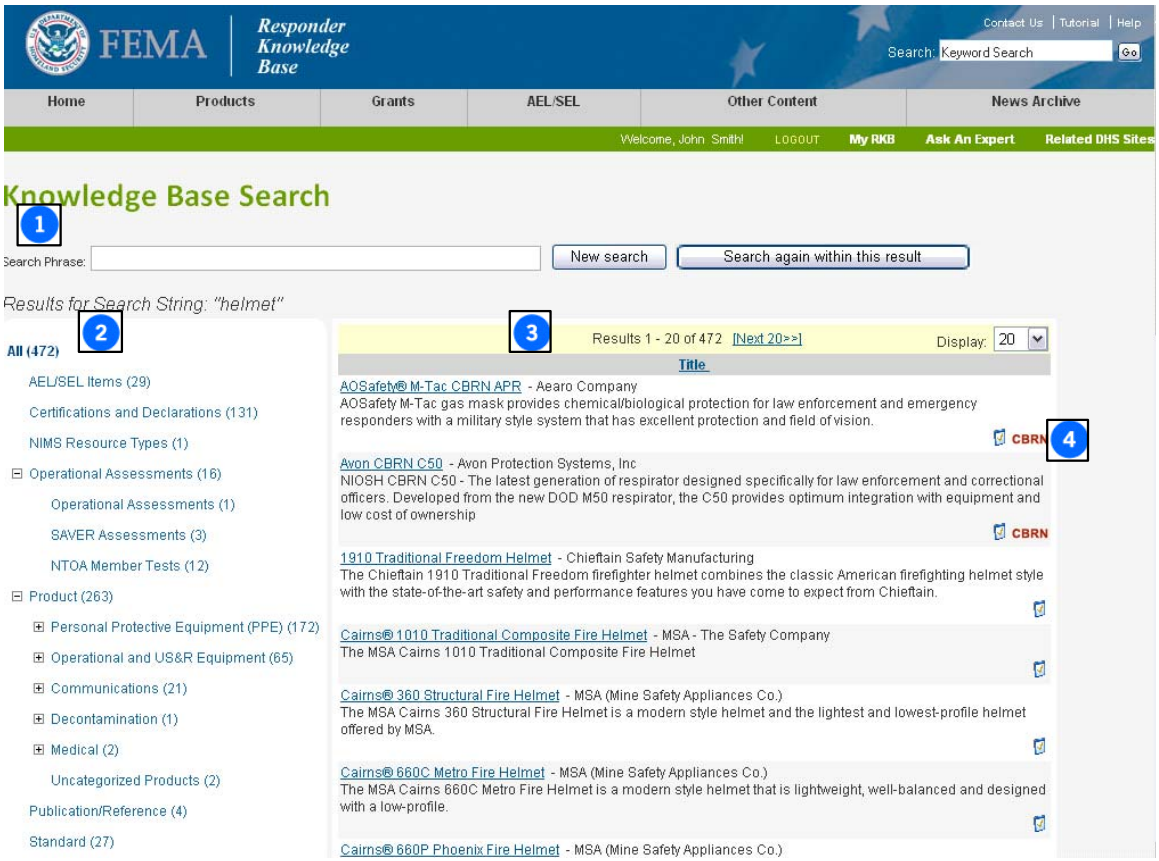
RKB Content

Products

One of the main points of interest for users who visit the RKB is the **Products** section of the site. The RKB actively seeks out vendors/manufacturers who have responder related products. These products are not an exhaustive list, as they are put on the RKB voluntarily by the vendors/manufacturers. To view the products listed on the RKB, simply click on **Products** in the gray navigation bar of any RKB record page. This will bring up the **Products** content page. Products are broken down into categories by type/intended use. Products that do not fall within a specific category will be placed in the **Uncategorized Products** category. The full list of categories is:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Operational and US&R Equipment
- Information Technology
- Communications
- Detection
- Decontamination
- Medical
- Uncategorized Products

By clicking on any of the above categories in the RKB, it will open the results page and display the products from the selected category. Searches for specific products can be conducted by entering the search word in the **Search Phrase** text box.



1 **Search Phrase:**
Entering data in this box will allow for a search within the existing results, or will give the option to start a new search.

3 **Results Area:**
This shows a listing of all the products that are related to the search that was conducted.

2 **Category Navigation Tree:**
This navigation tree gives the user the ability to look at categories of specific areas of interest. When selected, only results that are under the selected category or subcategory will be displayed in the results area.

4 **Special Interest Icons:**
The special interest icons will be displayed on the right side of the results area.

Item #2, highlighted above, is the navigation tree on the left side of the screen. This tree can be expanded to view related records that fall under the keyword search that was conducted. For example, by clicking on the ⊞ next to the **Product** category it will expand the navigation tree to reveal subcategories that fall within the **Product** category. Once expanded, it will list the type of products found under that category and will change the ⊞ symbol to a ⊟ , which allows the navigation tree to be collapsed.

By clicking on a category, only those items that fall under that category will be shown in the results area (#3 above). Clicking on the items in the results area will pull up the record page for that item. Understanding the format and content of the individual record pages that are generated when selecting a specific product, or any RKB content item for that matter, is discussed later in the tutorial in the *Viewing Content* section.

Special Interest Icons

From the results of a product search, there are five possible icons that may appear in the product search results area. The significance of each icon is outlined in the chart below.

CBRN NIOSH CBRN Approved: This icon appears for respiratory protection products that have been approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) as meeting one of the NIOSH Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Statements of Standard. On the display page for that product, the NIOSH certifications will appear in the Knowledge Links box on the right side of the page.

Third-Party Certification(s) available: This icon appears for products that have been tested by a third party. On the display page for that product, the certification(s) will appear in the Knowledge Links box on the right side of the page. This icon will NOT appear if an item is self-certified to a standard by the manufacturer.

Operational Assessment(s) available: This icon appears for products that have at least one associated Operational Assessments Report, such as a comparative test through the System Assessment and Validation for Emergency Responders (SAVER) Program. Operational Assessments can be either single-product or comparative, but always offer independent test results in realistic conditions or against live agents. On the display page for that product, the Operational Assessment(s) will appear in the Knowledge Links box on the right side of the page.

User Opinion(s) Available: This icon appears for products or training courses that have at least one user opinion giver on the site. On the display page for that product, the user opinion(s) is located in the Knowledge Links box on the right side of the page.

TSA The Transportation Security Administration (TSA), in conjunction with the Transportation Security Laboratory, maintains a Qualified Products List (QPL) for use in airports. For a product to be certified by TSA and placed on the QPL it must meet both laboratory testing and operational performance requirements. Some products pass only one part of the testing, others pass both and are placed on the QPL.

AEL/SEL

Introduction

The RKB is the sole source for the interactive versions of the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate's (GPD) Authorized Equipment List (AEL) and the InterAgency Board's (IAB) Standardized Equipment List (SEL), as well as the Integrated AEL/SEL Display feature.

A quick overview:

AEL - The AEL is put out by the GPD and is an authorized equipment category list—not an authorized product list. That means that the AEL provides general descriptions of types of equipment which are allowable for purchase using DHS grant funds, but it will not list any specific products (i.e. products by name brand or manufacturer). Only those items listed on the AEL will be allowable for acquisition using DHS grant funds, although in very limited instances there are exceptions to this rule.

SEL – The SEL is put out by the InterAgency Board (IAB) and is similar to the AEL in that it shares many of the same equipment categories (and designation numbers), provides general descriptions of types of equipment, but goes further by making recommendations on training and standards, with a focus on interoperability. However, it differs in the fact that the SEL can be linked to actual products on the RKB (only those products listed by their vendors on the RKB) when approved by the IAB as meeting the category's intended use(s) criteria.

Integrated AEL/SEL – The Integrated AEL/SEL is the bridge in the RKB to indirectly link products (listed on the RKB by their vendors) to the AEL. As previously mentioned, the AEL does not contain specific products, while the SEL can be linked to products when approved by the IAB. Where the AEL and SEL share identical equipment categories, the AEL and SEL records are linked together through a feature in the RKB (this feature, **Knowledge Links**, will be discussed later in this tutorial), thus allowing a responder to determine if a specific product may be covered by an AEL category.

The following sections of this tutorial will go into greater detail on the purposes of these Lists, as well as the steps that users will take to find them in the RKB, search them, their relationship to each other, and relationship to grant programs listed in the RKB.

The Authorized Equipment List

The Authorized Equipment List (AEL) is published by Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) and provides first responders with a reference list of generic equipment category items. It is important to note that the AEL is an authorized equipment category list—not an authorized product list. That means that the AEL provides descriptions of types of categories of equipment which are allowable for purchase using certain DHS grant funds, but the list does NOT list products by name brand or manufacturer. Only those items listed on the AEL will be allowable for acquisition using DHS grant funds, although in very limited instances there are exceptions to this rule.

As with any RKB content, there are many ways to find AEL items, including site-wide keyword searches or knowledge links from related items. To get to the page below, click on the **AEL/SEL** tab in the gray navigation bar located at the top of any RKB record page. On the next page click on **AEL Only**.

This is the "home page" of the AEL, and it can be expanded through the tree structure to get to individual AEL items. Once any AEL item is selected, the standard content display page for that item will open, and **Knowledge Links** will allow the related products, publications, standards, grants, and other information to be examined.

1 **Search Phrase:** Keyword search on the item name/type within the AEL.

2 **Customize by Grant:** Create a "custom" AEL by clicking on **This list contains all items. Click here to customize by Grant**, and by selecting only the grants of interest in the grant selection box and then clicking on **Customize**.

3 **AEL Navigation Tree:** Expand any branch of the tree to see subsections and individual AEL items by clicking on the folder.

4 **AEL Downloads:** This area provides a change log and downloads for key documents.

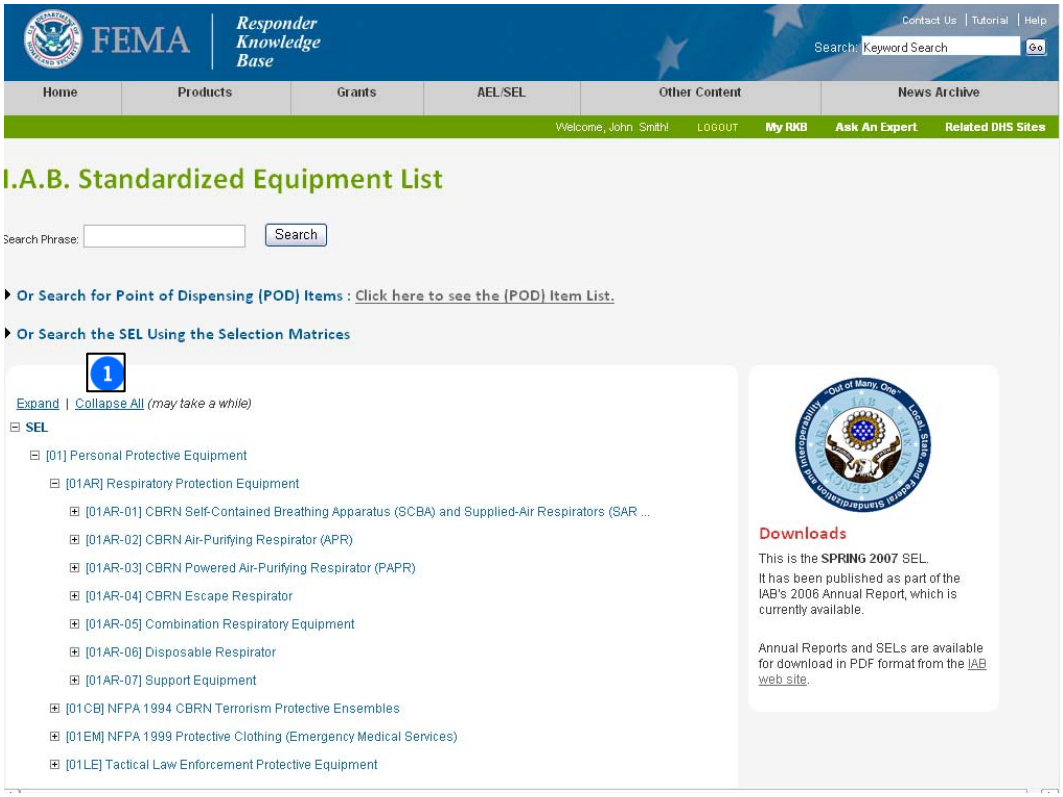
RKB users have the option of creating a "customized" AEL display by selecting and/or unselecting certain grant programs by clicking on the **This list contains all items. Click here to customize by Grant** link. By clicking this link, a box containing a list of grant programs will appear. The AEL is then able to be filtered by DHS FEMA grant program by clicking on the small box(es) to the left of the grant(s) to select or unselect the desired program(s).

There is also the option to **Check All** and/or **Uncheck All**. This is featured at the top of the list of grant programs. Once the desired grants have been selected, the **Customize** button should be selected at the bottom of the grant selection box screen. This will produce a filtered list that is tailored to the selected grant program(s).

The Standardized Equipment List

The InterAgency Board's (IAB) Standardized Equipment List (SEL) is published to provide first responders with a recommended list of generic equipment items with a focus to training, standards and interoperability considerations. Its initial focus was Weapons of Mass Destruction/ Chemical, Biological, Radiological/Nuclear, and Explosive (CBRNE) Incident response, but it is now being expanded to an "all-hazards" list with an emphasis on CBRNE. The list is broken down into 21 main SEL categories. These categories are then broken down into generic categories of types of equipment and then further broken down into the individual types of equipment that would fall underneath them. From here, where applicable, the components that make up the individual types of equipment will be listed.

To get to the SEL on the RKB, click on the **AEL/SEL** tab located in the gray navigation bar at the top of any RKB record page. On the results page, click on **SEL Only**. This opens the IAB SEL record page, pictured below. Clicking on the ⊞ next to each SEL category will expand the navigation tree structure to get to the individual SEL items. Once any SEL item is selected, the standard content display page will open for that item, and with in the **Knowledge Links** section will display related items, such as products, publications, standards, grants, and operational suitability tests.

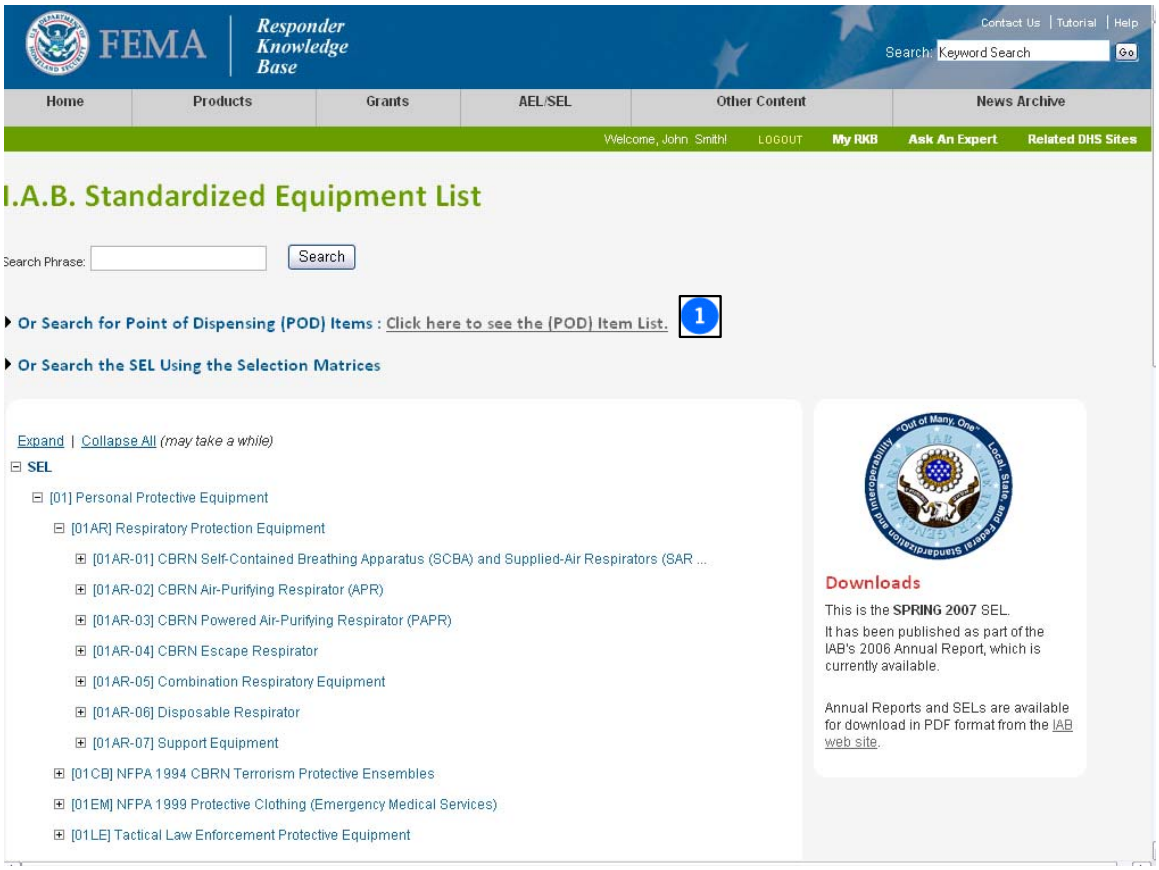


1 **SEL Navigation Tree:**
Expand any branch of the tree to see subsections and individual SEL items by clicking on the folders.

NOTE: Some items that are recommended by the IAB are not eligible for grant funding, so it is important to be sure which list is being used when considering grant allow-ability.

The IAB Medical Subgroup is testing a concept to improve the utility of the information within the SEL and AEL. The first test is the development of a "list within a list" for items applicable to the establishment of a Point of Dispensing (POD). A POD is a location where pharmaceuticals and other medications are distributed to end users. These facilities range from small clinics to large operations with multiple staging and operation areas. They may also support a range of methods of distributing drugs and medications to the patients. Items applicable to PODs have been annotated by adding "POD-List" to the operational considerations section. A keyword search for "POD-List" will produce a list of these items. This list is not intended to be absolute, but an evolving sample of relevant items.

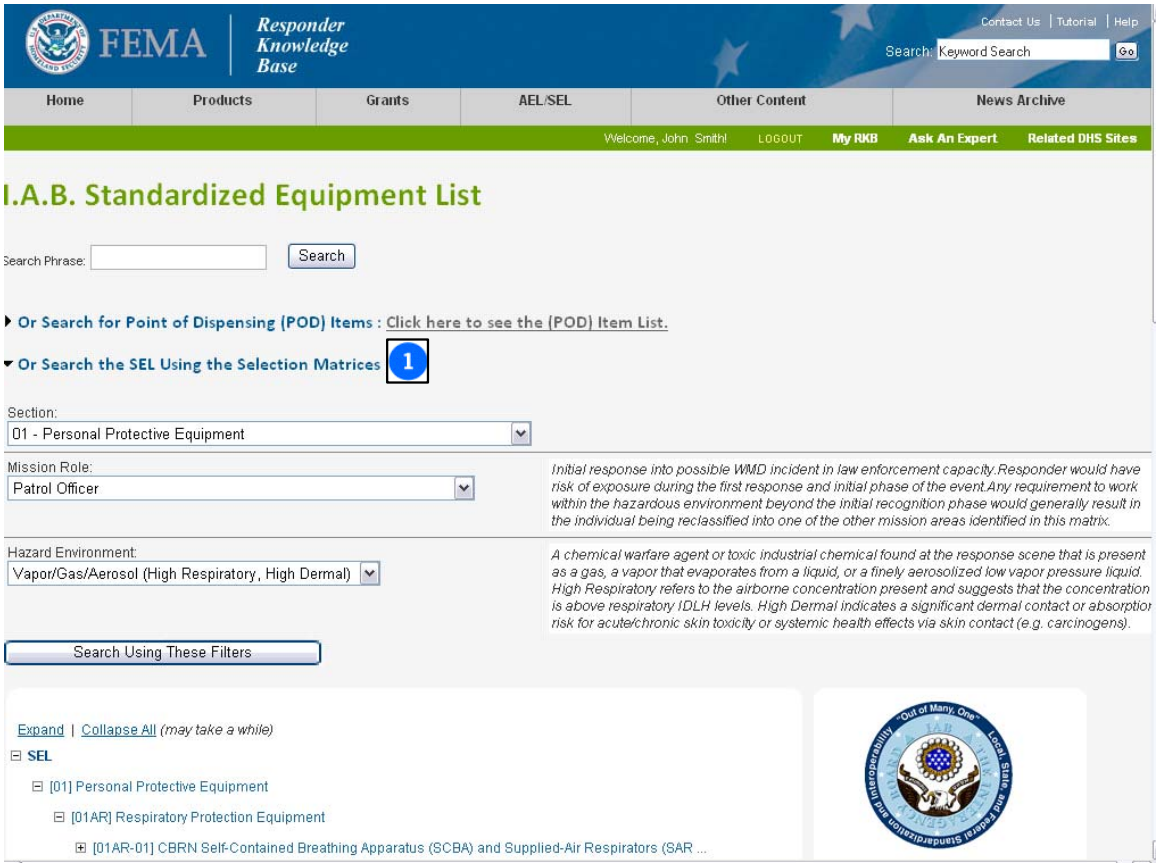
To view the POD items, simply click on **Or Search for Point of Dispensing (POD) Items: Click here to see the (POD) Item List** at the top of the SEL content page. This will open up the POD items list. Clicking on a desired item will open the SEL record for viewing.



1 **POD Items List Link:**
Clicking on this list will open the screen that contains the POD List items.

Some of the most common questions about the SEL relate to the specific equipment recommended for particular responders in specific hazard situations. The IAB has developed a tool that allows users to choose (within each equipment category) a hazard type and mission role, and then see what is recommended. The tool is not comprehensive, but it does allow the IAB to give some ideas to responders. Some combinations (for example, a police patrol officer in a high-vapor chemical threat environment) have few or no recommendations - in those cases, the IAB recommends those personnel not be operating in that threat environment.

To use this feature, first click on the black triangle to the left of **Or Search the SEL Using the Selection Matrices**. Second, select the equipment category from the dropdown list under the area for **Section**. Next select from the dropdown under the **Mission Role** section. Last, select the type of **Hazard Environment** from the dropdown menu and then click the **Search Using These Filters** button, and a standard search results page with the list of recommended items will be displayed.



1 **Search the SEL Using the Selection Matrices:** Enter a section, mission role, and hazard environment, then click on **Search Using These Filters** for recommendations.

Additionally, as with any RKB content, there are other ways to find SEL items, including site-wide keyword searches or Knowledge Links from related content.

The Integrated AEL/SEL Display

To support the response community, the RKB has developed an integrated format that displays Authorized Equipment List (AEL) and Standardized Equipment List (SEL) information in a single record which eliminates the need to reference two separate lists. The integrated AEL/SEL display combines the Authorized Equipment List (AEL) with the Standardized Equipment List (SEL). The AEL is published by Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) and is provided to determine equipment allow-ability under multiple grant programs. The SEL is provided by the InterAgency Board (IAB) for equipment standardization and interoperability. The tree below acts as an index to the combined lists. Individual records within the tree will display an AEL item, SEL item, or both. The record will be marked accordingly with either the AEL logo, SEL logo, or both logos.

The main function of the Integrated AEL/SEL is to serve as the bridge from products listed on the RKB - to the SEL - and finally to the AEL. As discussed in the AEL section of the tutorial, the AEL does not list individual products, nor have products linked to its categories. While the SEL also does not list individual products, products can be linked to applicable SEL categories if deemed to meet the criteria of the category as determined by the IAB. In many instances the SEL and AEL share categories, and where they do, are linked together through the Integrated AEL/SEL, thus indirectly linking products to the AEL category that they may fit under.

As with any RKB content, there are many ways to find the integrated AEL/SEL items, including site-wide keyword searches or knowledge links from related items. To get to the page below, click on the **AEL/SEL** link located in the gray navigation bar at the top of any RKB content page. On the next record page, click on **Integrated AEL/SEL Display**.

Pictured below is the “home page” of the Integrated AEL/SEL and the navigation tree structure that can be expanded to get to the individual items. Once any AEL/SEL item is selected, the record page for that item will be displayed, and the **Knowledge Links** box, located on the right-hand side of the record page, will highlight links within the RKB to related products, publications, standards, grants, and other information.

1 **Search Phrase:** Keyword search on the item name/type within the Integrated AEL/SEL.

2 **Customize by Grant:** Create a "custom" AEL/SEL by clicking on **This list contains all items. Click here to customize by Grant**, and by selecting only the grants of interest in the grant selection box and then clicking on **Customize**.

3 **Integrated AEL/SEL Navigation Tree:** Expand any branch of the tree to see subsections and individual AEL/SEL items by clicking on the folder.

4 **AEL/SEL Downloads:** This area provides a change log and downloads for key documents.

NOTE: Not all of the items on the Integrated AEL/SEL display will be searchable using the SEL selection matrices because there are some items that only appear on the AEL.

The IAB Medical Subgroup is testing a concept to improve the utility of the information within the SEL and AEL. The first test is the development of a "list within a list" for items applicable to the establishment of a Point of Dispensing (POD). A POD is a location where pharmaceuticals and other medications are distributed to end users. These facilities range from small clinics to large operations with multiple staging and operation areas. They may also support a range of methods of distributing drugs and medications to the patients. Items applicable to PODs have been annotated by adding "POD-List" to the operational considerations section. A keyword search for "POD-List" will produce a list of these items. This list is not intended to be absolute, but an evolving sample of relevant items.

To view the POD items, simply click on **Or Search for Point of Dispensing (POD) Items: Click here to see the (POD) Item List** at the top of the Integrated AEL/SEL Content page. This will open up the POD items list. Clicking on a desired item will open the AEL/SEL record for viewing.

Some of the most common questions about the SEL relate to the specific equipment recommended for particular responders in specific hazard situations. The IAB has developed a tool that allows users to choose (within each equipment category) a hazard type and mission role, and then see what is recommended. The tool is not comprehensive, but it does allow the IAB to give you some ideas. You'll note that some combinations (for example, a police patrol officer in a high-vapor chemical threat environment) have few or no recommendations - in those cases, the IAB recommends those personnel not be operating in that threat environment.

This feature has also been included in the Integrated AEL/SEL section of the RKB. To use this feature, first click on the black triangle to the left of **Or Search the SEL Using the Selection Matrices**. Second, select the equipment category from the dropdown list under the area for **Section**. Next select from the dropdown under the **Mission Role** section. Last, select the type of **Hazard Environment** from the dropdown menu and then click the **Search Using These Filters** button, and a standard search results page with the list of recommended items will be displayed.

1 **Search Phrase Box:** Conduct a keyword search within the Integrated AEL/SEL.

2 **POD Items List Link:** Clicking on this list will open the screen that contains the POD List items.

3 **Search the Integrated AEL/SEL Using the Selection Matrices:** Enter a section, mission role, and hazard environment, then click on **Search Using These Filters** for recommendations.

As with the individual AEL section of the RKB, RKB users have the option of creating a "customized" Integrated AEL/SEL display by selecting and/or unselecting certain grant programs by clicking on the **This list contains all items. Click here to customize by Grant** link. By clicking this link, a box containing a list of grant programs will appear. The Integrated AEL/SEL is then able to be filtered by DHS grant program by clicking on the small box(es) to the left of the grant(s) to select or unselect the desired program(s).

There is also the option to **Check All** and/or **Uncheck All**. This is featured at the top of the list of grant programs. Once the desired grant(s) have been selected, the **Customize** button should be selected at the bottom of the grant selection box screen. This will produce a filtered list that is tailored to the selected grant program(s).

NOTE: Not all items in the Integrated AEL/SEL display will be sorted by using the Grant Customization box because there are some items that only appear on the SEL and therefore have no grant guidance.

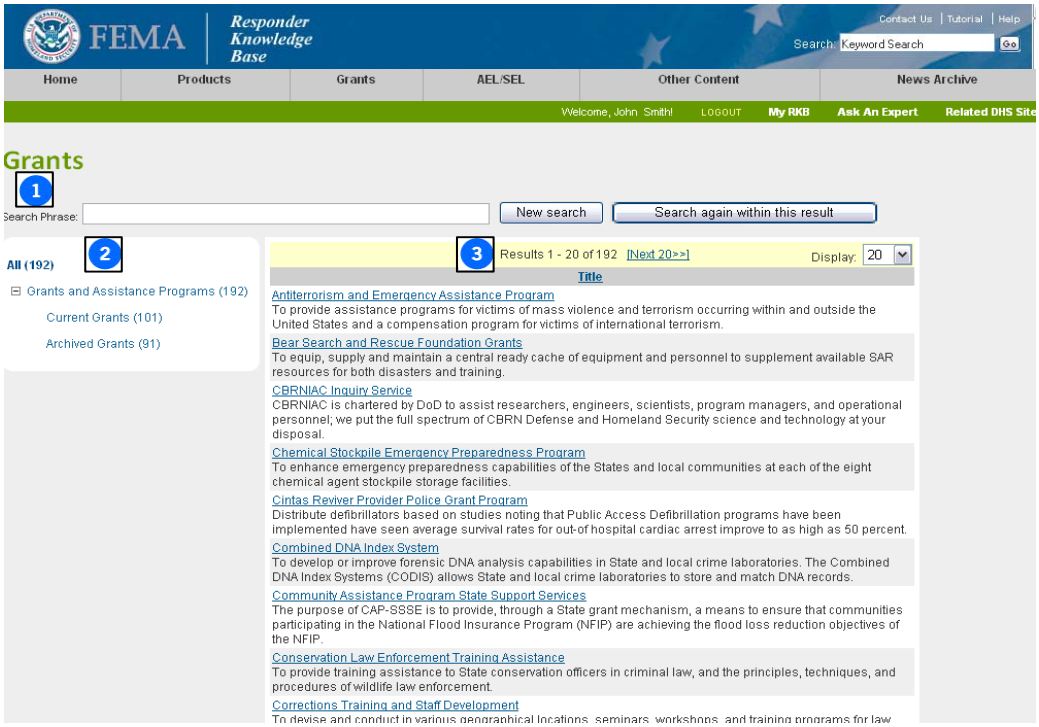
Grants

The RKB has a section devoted entirely to grants. These grant programs serve as a crucial method for many responders to acquire equipment and other resources that may not be covered by state or local budgets. The RKB's **Grant** section houses information on grants from government agencies, as well as private sector companies. These grant records contain the source of the grant program, a summary of the program, objectives that the program hopes to achieve, application deadlines, eligibility requirements, contact information for the grant, and links to the applications or any other pertinent information.

To access the **Grants** content area in the RKB, simply click on **Grants** in the gray navigation bar on any RKB record page. The RKB has broken the grants down into three categories, **Current Grants** and **Archived Grants.**

Current Grants: This section contains current Fiscal Year (FY) program grants, grants that reoccur yearly and have the same application deadlines, or grants that do not have a deadline.

Archived Grants: This section contains grant programs from past FY's to serve as reference for current FY grants.



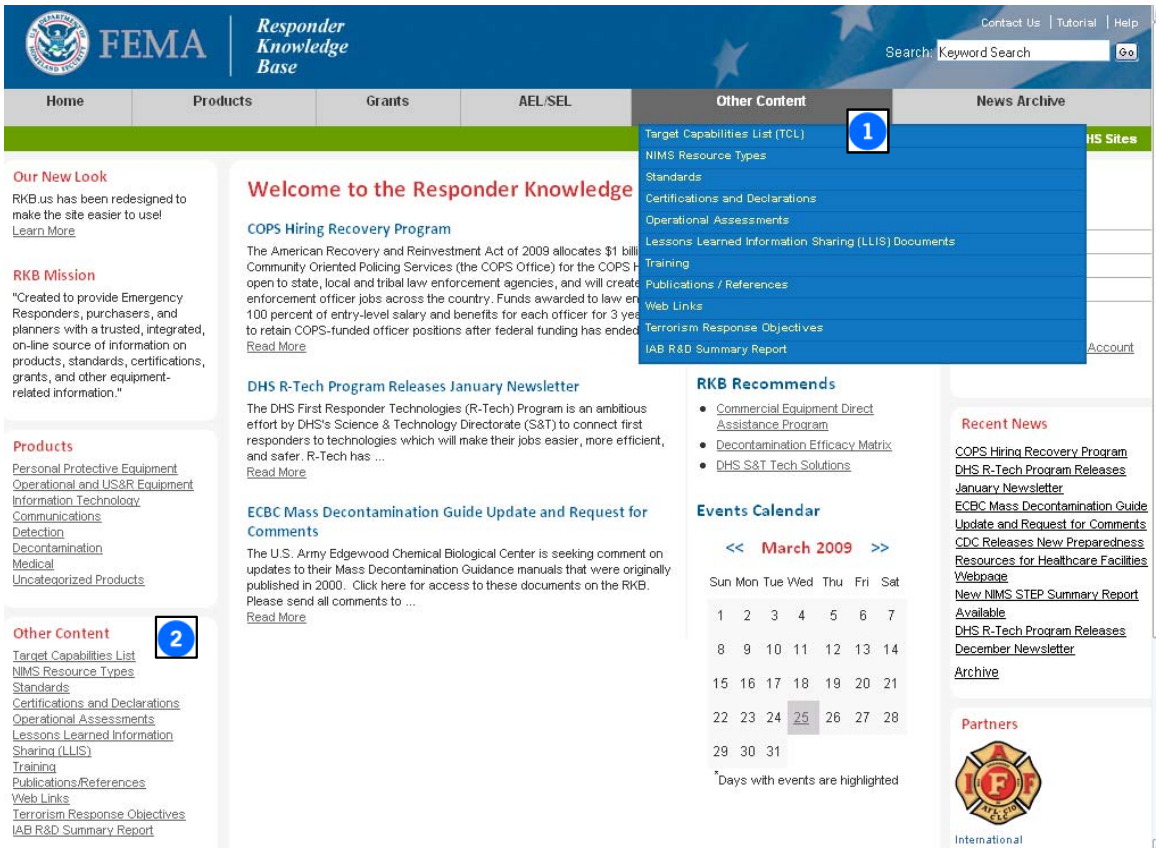
1 **Search Phrase:**
Entering keywords or specific grants in this box will allow for a search within the existing results, or will give the option to start a new search.

2 **Category Navigation Tree:**
This navigation tree gives the user the ability to filter the Grants by type.

3 **Results Area:**
This shows a listing of all the grants that are related to the search that was conducted.

Other Content

Along with the content areas located in the gray navigation bar at the top of every RKB record page, is the **Other Content** section. The dropdown menu under this button allows different categories of information in the RKB to be viewed, to include sections such as the **Target Capabilities List, NIMS Resource Types, Standards, Certifications and Declarations, Operational Assessments, Lessons Learned Information Sharing, Training, Publications / References, Web Links, Terrorism Response Objectives,** and **the InterAgency Board Research and Development Summary**.



1 **The Other Content Tab (With dropdown menu shown):**
Scroll through the dropdown menu to access this content on the RKB.

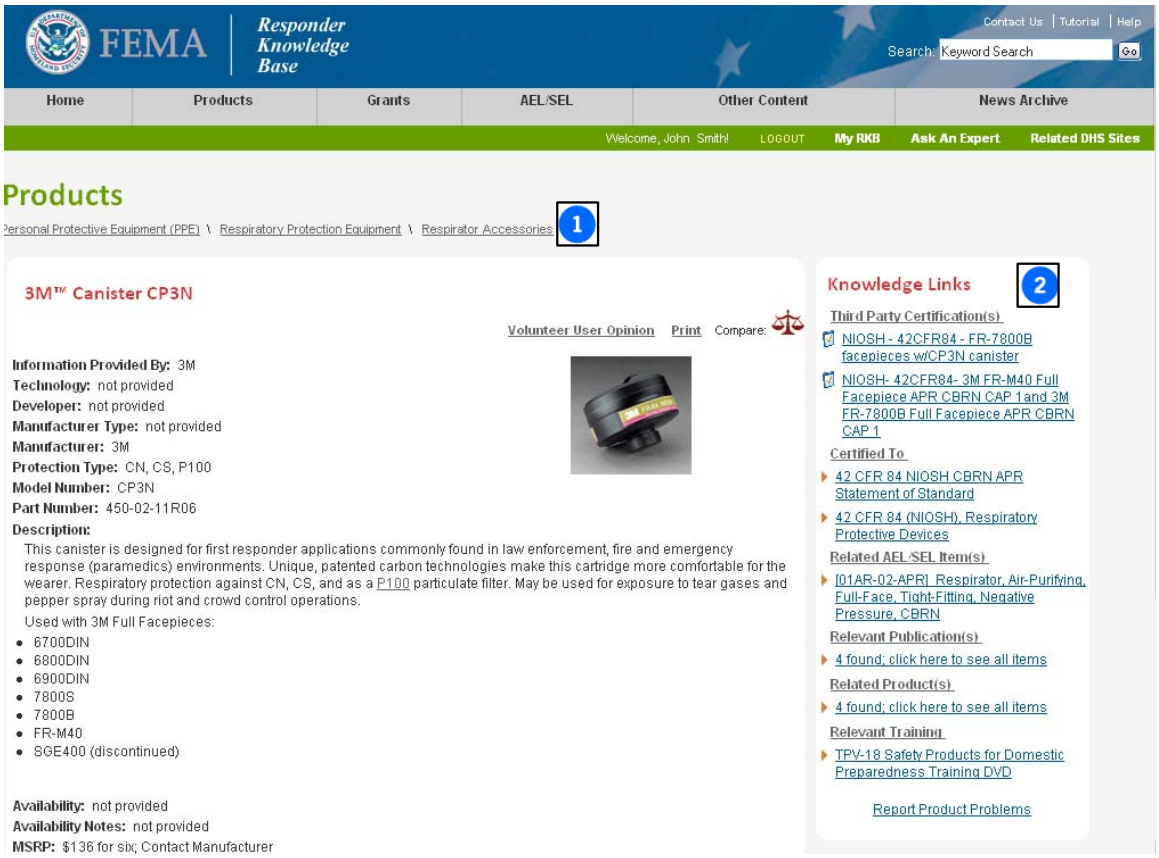
2 **The Other Content Homepage List:**
Click on any of the content categories to view that section of the RKB.

Viewing Content

Content Display Page

The previous sections of the RKB tutorial have shown a user the content sections of the RKB, and how to perform searches in these areas, whether they are specific searches within content areas of the RKB or general keyword searches throughout the entire content of the site. This section will attempt to highlight important areas of the content display pages that are generated through these searches.

Along with the gray navigation bar, there are two distinctive elements in any content display pages: the **Navigation Steps** and the **Knowledge Links** box.



1 **Navigation Steps:**
These steps outline the progression that the search has taken from initial content category through the subcategories to the final record result. Clicking on any of these links will navigate the user back to that content page.

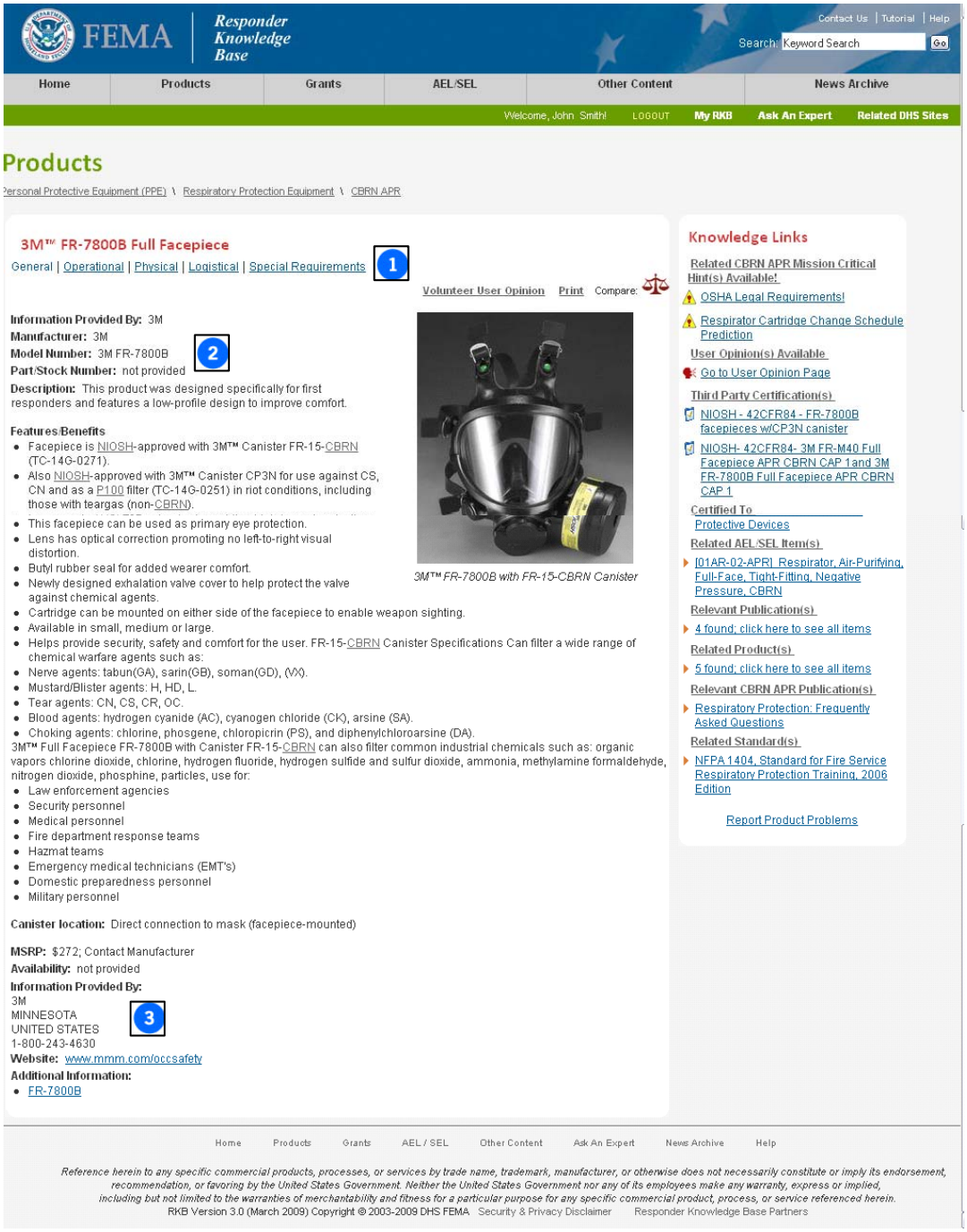
2 **Knowledge Links Box:**
This area shows related content on the RKB to the item currently being displayed in the content display page.

No matter what type of content is being viewed (product, standard, AEL/SEL item, publication, etc.), the content display page puts all of the information about that item on the left side of the page under the **Navigation Steps**, and the name of the entry. The specific information fields displayed will vary depending on the content type. The example below is a product, so fields like Manufacturer, Part Number, Description, and Availability Date are displayed. If a standard had been used, the information fields would include the name of the standard-making organization, the effective date of the standard, the version and edition, etc.

For some items, a great deal of information is available. In the example below, a respiratory protection product is shown that has five additional descriptive category links full of information. Clicking on one of the descriptive category links will switch the type of vendor-supplied information that is displayed. These categories and the questions asked will vary between types of products. Obviously an RKB user researching a chemical detector is seeking different information from someone researching respiratory protection.

DON'T FORGET TO SCROLL DOWN!

Most content items have links at the bottom of the page to contact vendors, download special documents, or go to the contributing organization's web site for more details.



1 **Descriptive Category Links:** Clicking on one of the links will show another page of data on this item. All vendor-supplied data on this item is on the left side of the page.

2 **Vendor Supplied Data:** Data supplied by the vendor.

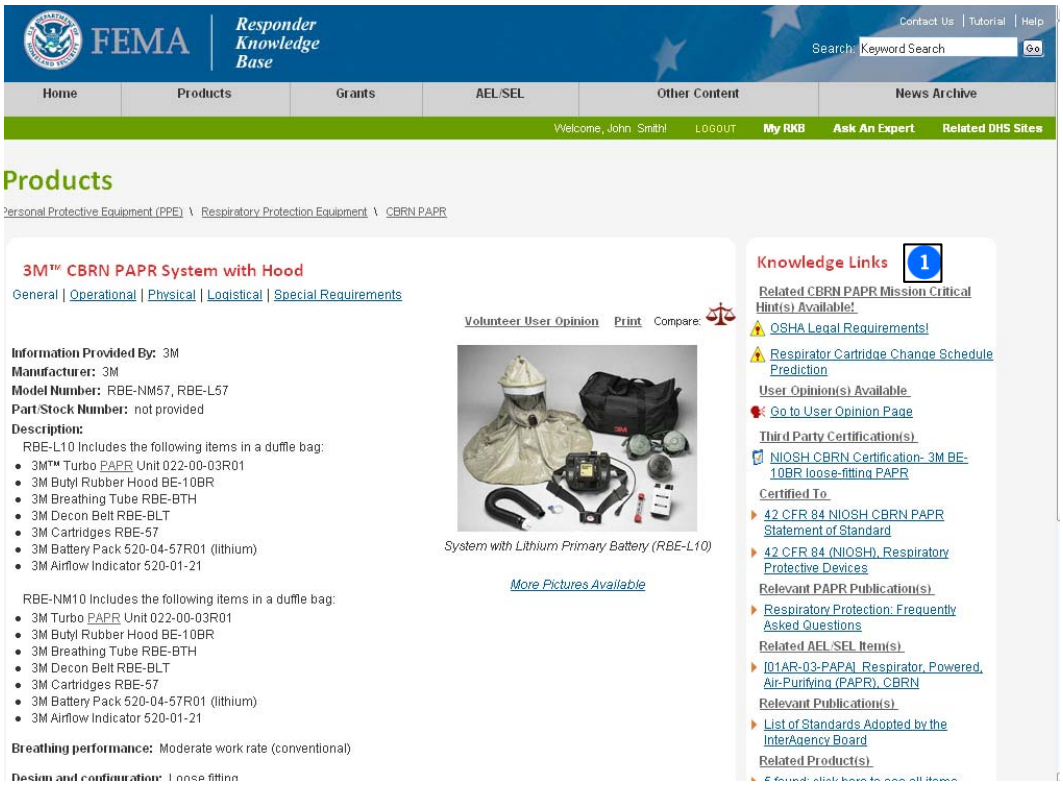
3 **Vendor Contact Info and Additional Info Sections**

Whenever a content display page is pulled during a search of any kind (product, grant, publication, standard, etc.), the **Knowledge Links** box on the right-hand side of the screen is generated to show links to related content for that item. When a content display page is created for any RKB content item, the RKB staff attempts to link all relevant content to that record. This assists RKB users in that it groups pertinent information together in an easily viewed and accessed manner. Unlike many websites that use simple word counts to determine relevance, the **Knowledge Links** in the RKB are done manually between record items, most often after consultation with a subject matter expert.

The most frequent knowledge links for records in the RKB are:

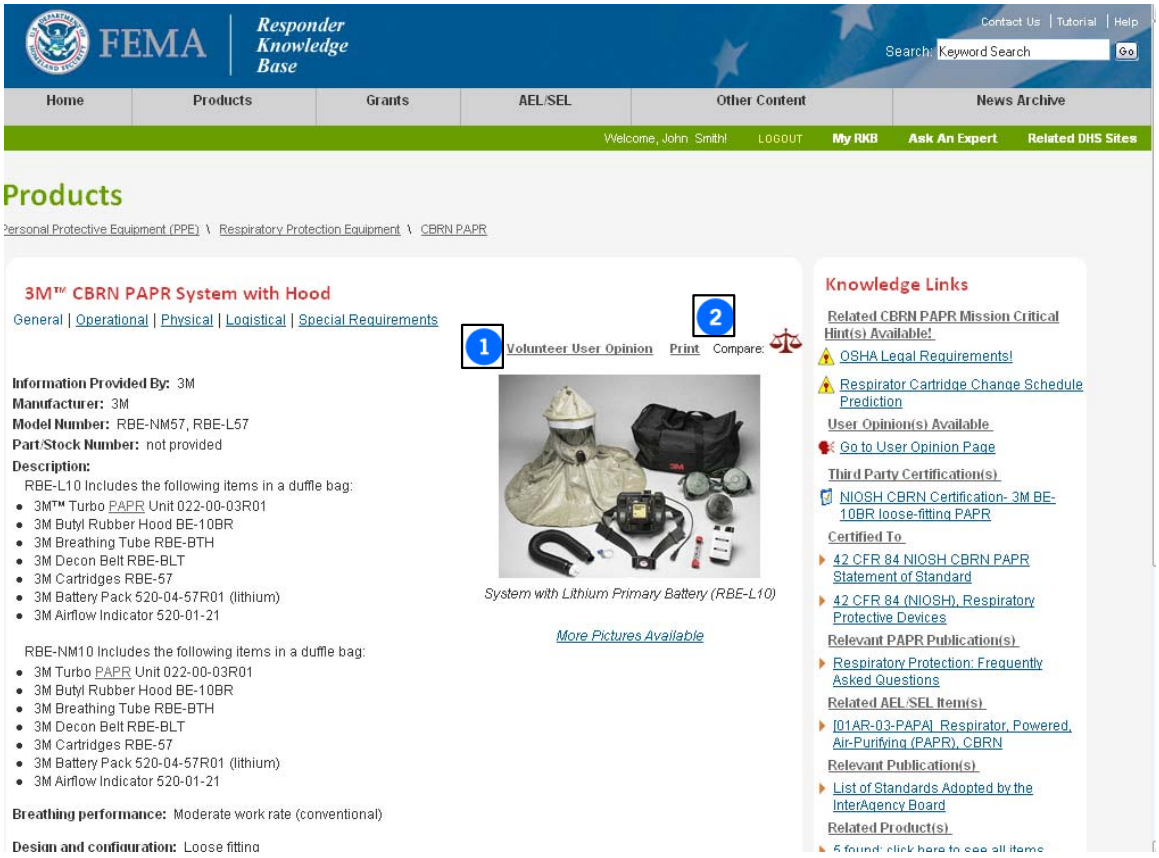
- Mission Critical Hint(s)
- Third Party Certification(s)
- Certified To (Standard)
- Related AEL/SEL Item(s)
- Relevant Publication(s)
- Related Product(s)
- Relevant CBRN APR Publication(s)
- Related Standard(s)

By clicking on any knowledge link, the system will direct the user to the connected content item. Often these other records are linked to additional information, which allows the user to view information that may be of interest to them that is outside of the current search that they are conducting.



1 **Knowledge Links:**
Knowledge Links in this box direct the user to related content in the RKB.

Additional areas of the content display page that are of interest to RKB users are the **Volunteer User Opinion** and **Print** links, and the **Compare** feature icon. Clicking on the **Print** link allows users to print the current content display page. The **Compare** feature is discussed in the next section of this tutorial, while the **Volunteer User Opinion** feature is covered in the *Additional Features* section of this tutorial.

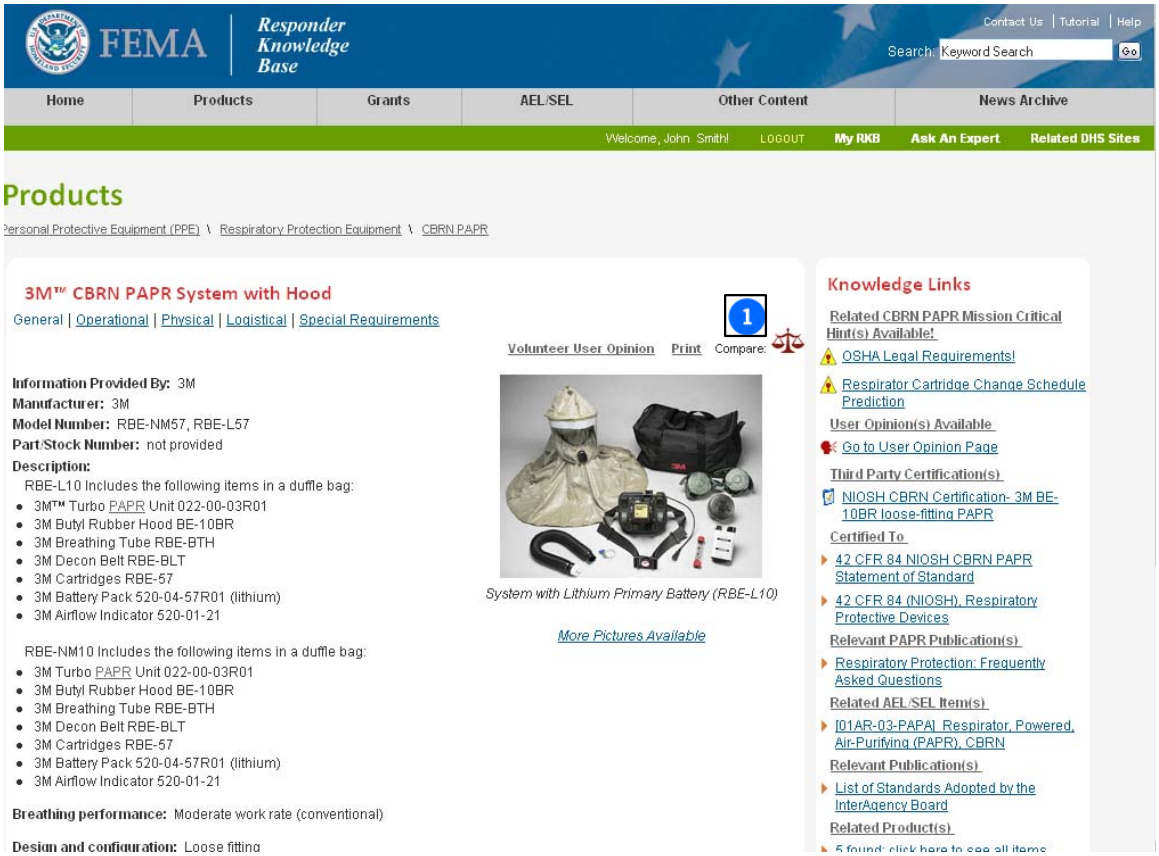


1 **Volunteer User Opinion:** This link is only visible to users with responder privileges when viewing products or training courses. **Please Volunteer** to help if you have experience with the item being displayed.

2 **Print and Compare Features:** The **Print** link and icon for the **Compare** feature.

Comparing RKB Content

There are two ways to compare items that are listed in the RKB. The first option is to use the **Compare** icon in a content display page (when this feature is available). By clicking on this icon, it provides a list of products that are similar in function and can be compared. The second way to compare items is to use the **Search Phrase** box in the **Products** content section in the RKB. The compare functionality is only available for products of the same type or those within what the RKB calls "subtypes".

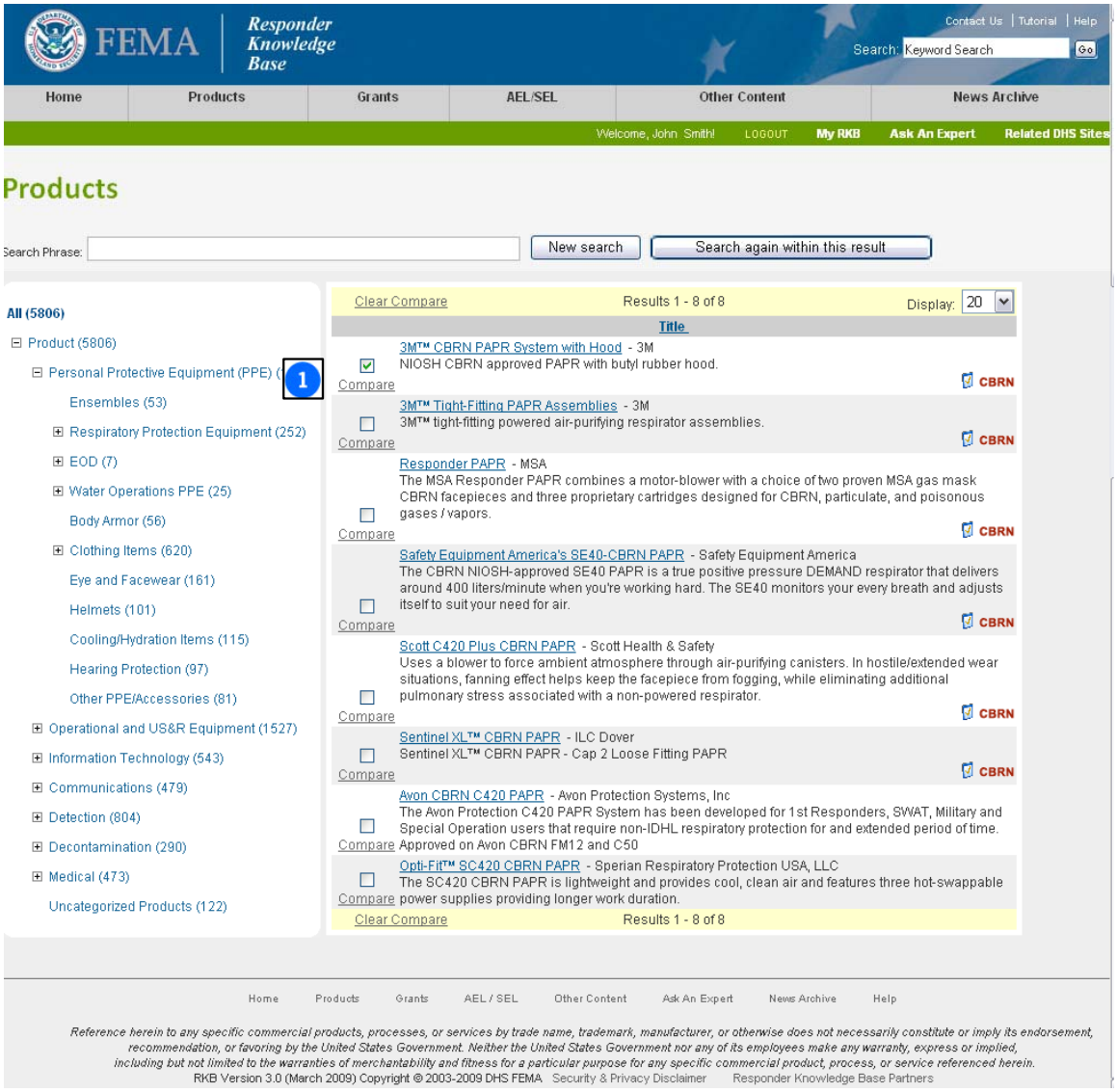


1 **Compare Icon:**

Use the **Compare** ( ) icon to list comparable products within the same subtype.

To compare these products, click on the small check box next to the titles of the product. Up to three items can be selected for comparison at one time. After the items are selected, clicking on **Compare** under one of the check boxes will pull up the side by side comparison table. To compare different items that were pulled in the results area, simply click “back” in the browser and unselect items to remove from the search. Selecting up to three new items and clicking compare will pull up a new comparison table.

NOTE: Only items that have peers in similar product categories in the RKB can be compared. If there are no similar products, then the comparison feature will not be available.

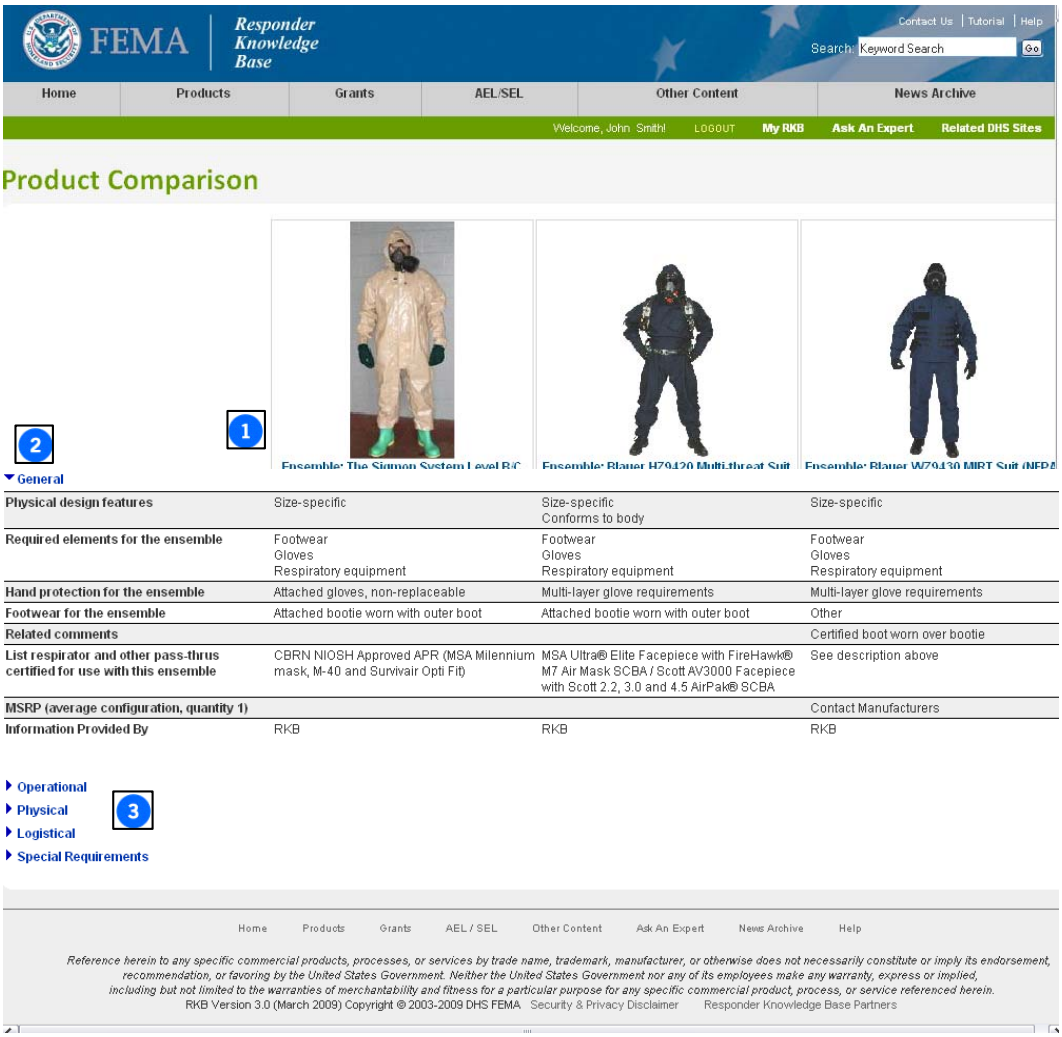


1 **Compare Check Box:**
Use the check boxes to select items to compare. Then click the word **Compare** below the check box.

Comparing Content – The Results

Once the products have been selected to compare, the results will be displayed in the following format.

Some products will have expandable sections at the bottom for additional functional information. Clicking on these expandable sections will open the selection providing more information.



1 **Comparison Header:**
Click here to go to the content display page for any of these products.

2 **Expanded Data Header:**
This section is expanded and open, showing the **General** features being compared for these three products.

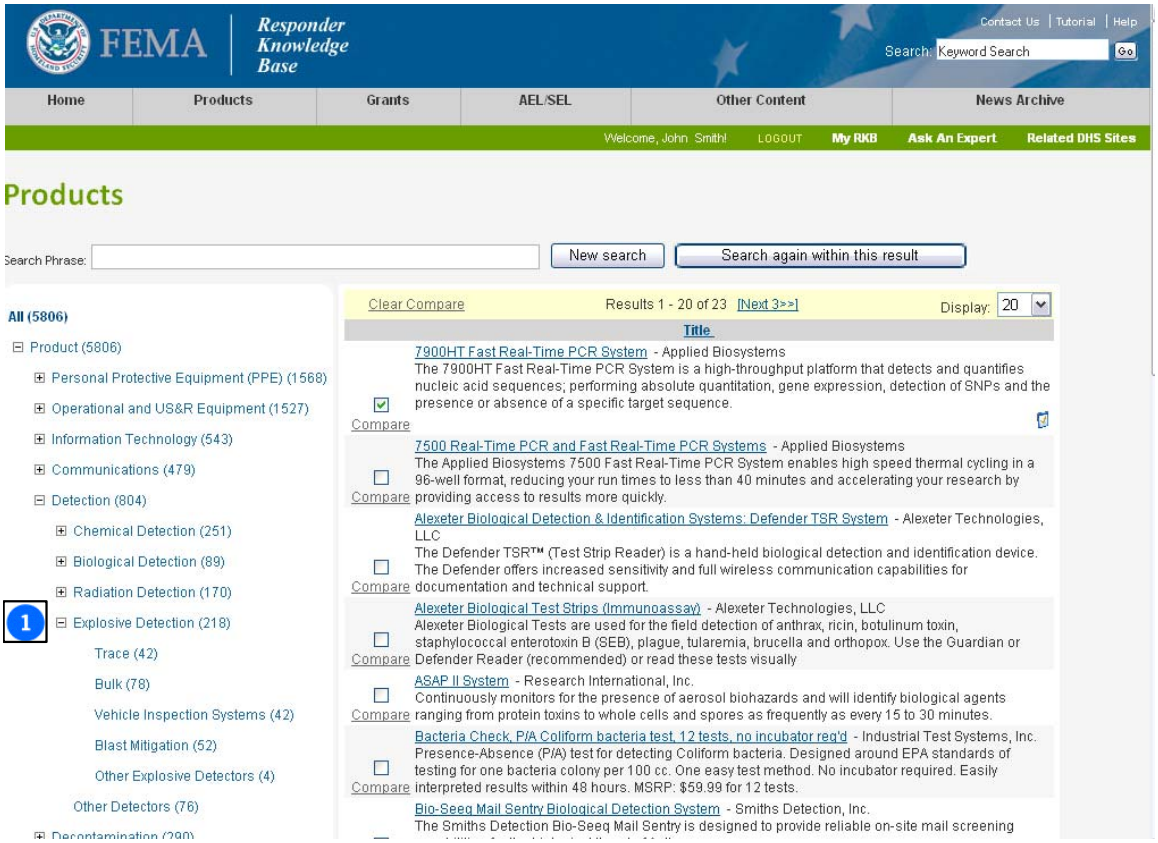
3 **Collapsed Data Headers:**
These are collapsed data areas. By clicking on the title the collapsed data header will open showing the features being compared for these three products.

Comparison Tables

The product Comparison Tables that are generated for explosives detectors are broken down into four different tables: **Bulk Detection, Trace Detection, Visual Inspection,** and **Blast Mitigation**. Information provided in each table will vary by the type of detector table being examined.

Information in these tables has been populated by manufacturer-supplied data, and the RKB does its best to ensure that information is complete and accurate. If a user comes across something that they feel is inaccurate or requires a second look, please contact the RKB via email at **RKBMailbox@us.saic.com** or by phone at **1-877-FEMA-RKB (1-877-336-2752)**.

To get to an example of a **Comparison Table**, click on **Products** in the gray navigation bar and then click on **Explosive Detection** under **Detection** in the navigation tree on the left hand side of the screen Subcategories for **Trace Detection, Bulk Detection**, **Vehicle Inspection Systems**, **Blast Mitigation** or **Other Explosive Detectors** will be available to filter the products even further.



1 **Explosive Detection:**
Click here to expand **Explosive Detection** content.

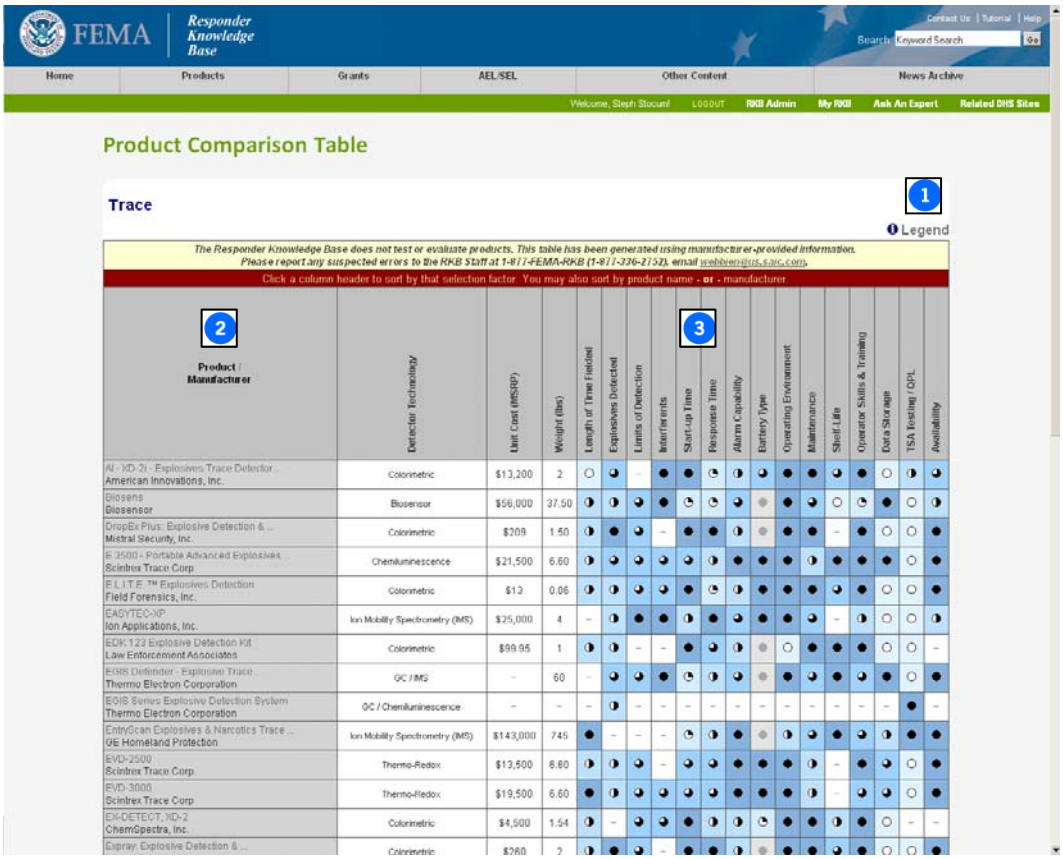
To view an example of a Comparison Table, under the **Trace** subcategory, select the AL-XD-2i Explosive Trace Detector. When the content display page opens, click on the **Compare** ( ) icon to be directed to the Comparison Table.

1 **Compare Icon:**
Click the **Compare** ( ) icon to be directed to the Comparison Tables.

The headings of each table provide the means to sort the table. By clicking on the "Product" link, it will sort by product. Clicking on the **Manufacturer** header link, will sort by manufacturer. The same goes with any of the other headings on the table. Each heading is sortable by ascending or descending order.

By moving the mouse pointer onto any given heading, a pop-up will be displayed with an explanation of the header. The same will happen with any of the pie chart measurements on the table to get pop-ups of the definition.

In addition to the pop-up definitions feature, there is a legend that explains what each pie chart measurement means. This legend can be found on the top right-hand corner of each table. Clicking on the **Legend** link will display a separate page that will explain, by heading, what each aspect of the Comparison Table means.



1 **Legends Link:**
Click here to go to the Legends Page.

2 **Products/Manufacturer Heading:**
You can either sort by Products or Manufacturer by clicking on either word.

3 **Headings:**
Click on any of these headings to sort by ascending or descending order.

Content Screening

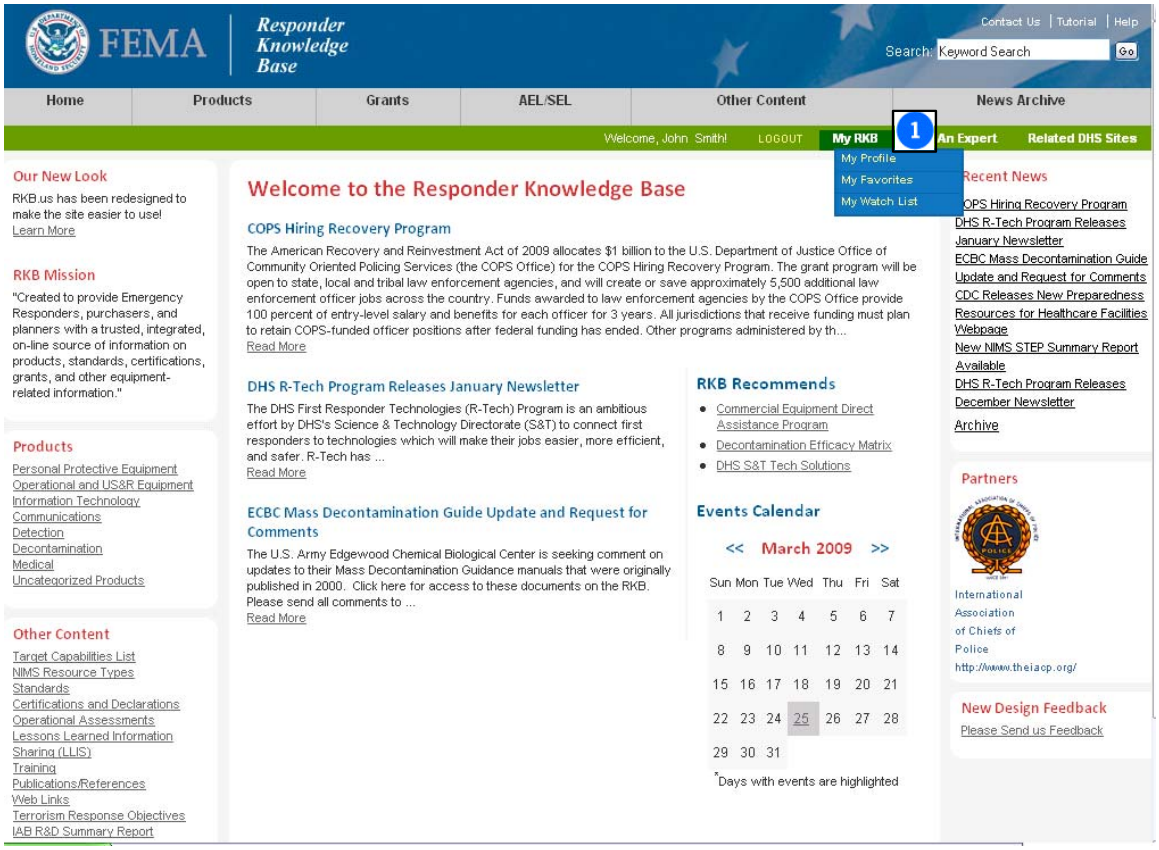
When information is submitted to the RKB for inclusion on the site, the RKB staff does preliminary research on the content to ensure the manufacturer and products are commercially available. However, as an information repository, the RKB doesn't actually evaluate the products. The RKB relies on subject matter experts such as the InterAgency Board and select Department of Homeland Security contacts, to validate the information provided by vendors.

Additionally, the RKB obtains from the manufacturer and publishes information about the product, including certifications against a known standard. These certifications are most often issued by third-parties and are available for review on the website. The RKB also posts results from operational assessments by reputable testing resources. All information about the certifications, test results, and other related information are available on the RKB.

If a user has a specific question about a product on the RKB, a good reference source is the **User Opinion** feature of the RKB. This feature solicits and compiles user opinions from users who have field-use experience with the products posted on the RKB. The goal of this feature is to answer any specific inquiries about the products from a first person point of view. The **User Opinion** feature is discussed in the this tutorial in the *Additional Features* section

MyRKB

The **MyRKB** feature, located in the green navigation bar, gives a registered RKB user access to a drop-down menu that gives users access to: their registration profile; a feature that tracks the user's history of RKB activity; a feature that gives the user the ability to create or modify a list of items they would like to follow on the RKB.



1 **MyRKB Feature:**
This feature gives the registered RKB user access to the **My Profile**, **My Favorites**, and **My Watch List** features.

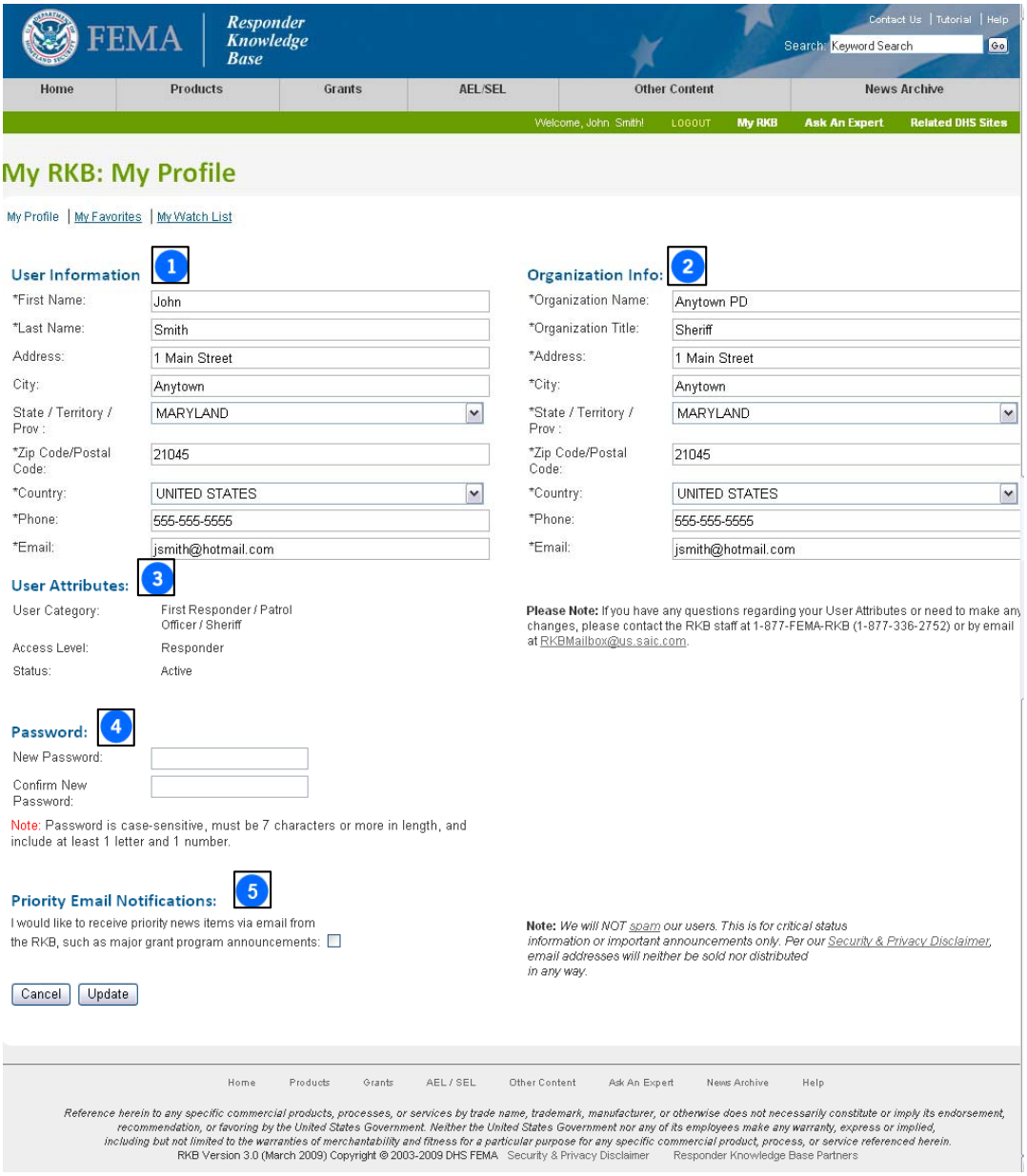
My Profile

In the **My Profile** section of the **MyRKB** feature, a registered RKB user has access to their **User Information** and **Organization Information** submitted when they first registered as a user with the RKB. By visiting this section of the RKB, a user can make updates to any information that may have changed since their initial registration with the RKB.

Below the **User Information** and **Organization Info** data fields, a user can review their current **User Attributes**. This section displays the current **User Category**, **Access Level** and **Status** of the user within the RKB. If this information is incorrect, the user is advised to reach the RKB staff toll free at **1-877-FEMA-RKB (1-877-336-2752)** or by email at **RKBMailbox@us.saic.com.**

In the **Password** section, a user also has the capability to change their password.

At the very bottom of this screen is the **Priority Email Notifications** checkbox. This feature allows users to voluntarily choose to receive priority news items via email from the RKB, such as major grant program announcements for example. This feature will NOT send unsolicited emails to registered RKB users. This feature is for critical status information or important announcements only. Per the RKB Security & Privacy Disclaimer, email addresses will neither be sold nor distributed in any way.



1 **User Information:** The user information from the initial RKB user registration can be updated in this section.

2 **Organization Information:** The organizational information from the initial RKB user registration can be updated in this section.

3 **User Attributes:** Allows a user to review their current **User Category**, **Access Level** and **Status** in the RKB.

4 **Password:** Section where the user has the ability to edit their password.

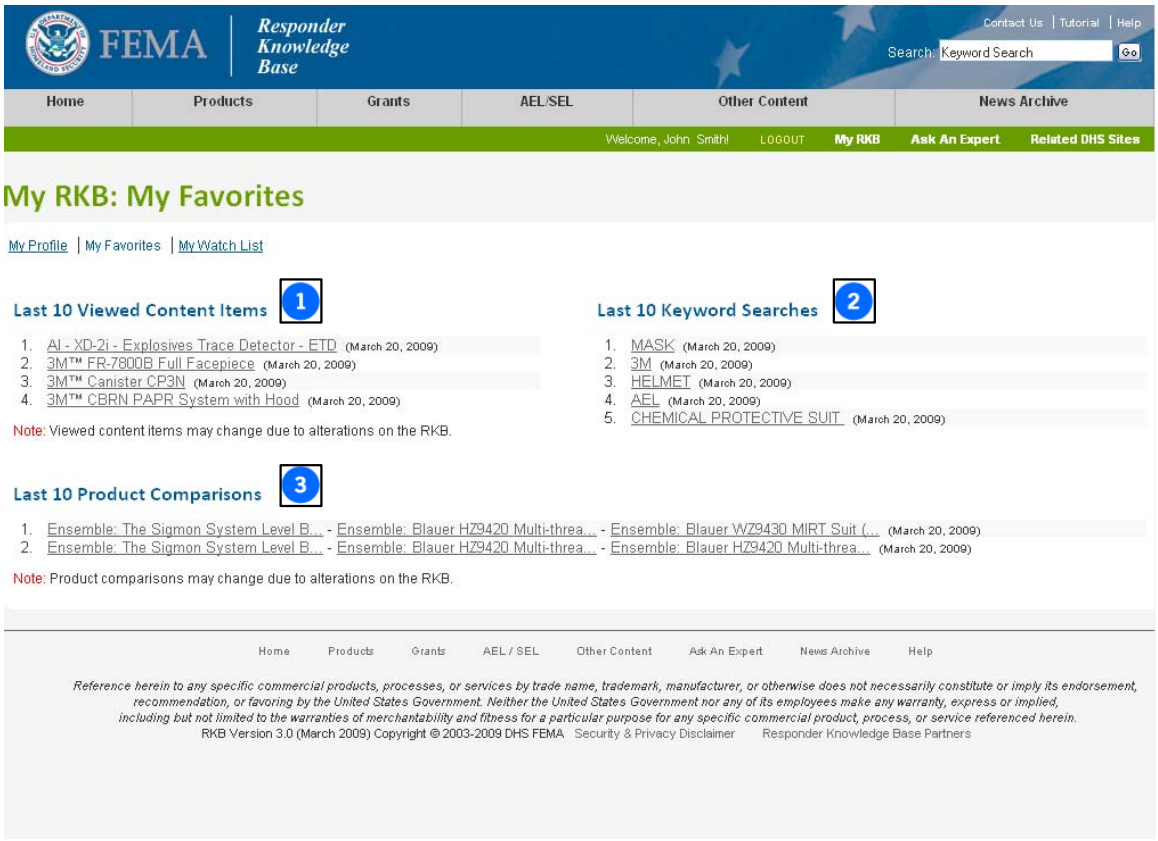
5 **Priority Email Notifications:** This feature allows users to voluntarily choose to receive priority news items via email from the RKB.

My Favorites

In the **My Favorites** section of **MyRKB**, a registered user can view information about their: last ten viewed content items on the RKB site; last ten keyword searches that have been conducted; last ten products compared using the **Compare** feature (discussed in the *Viewing Content: Comparison Tables* section of this tutorial).

By clicking on any of the text links in the sections below, the link will direct the user to the set of results conducted from that search.

NOTE: A new member of the website will see no listings under these headings. These lists will start to build once a user begins to view content, perform keyword searches, and compare items.



1 **Last 10 Viewed Content Items:** This section displays the last ten content items viewed.

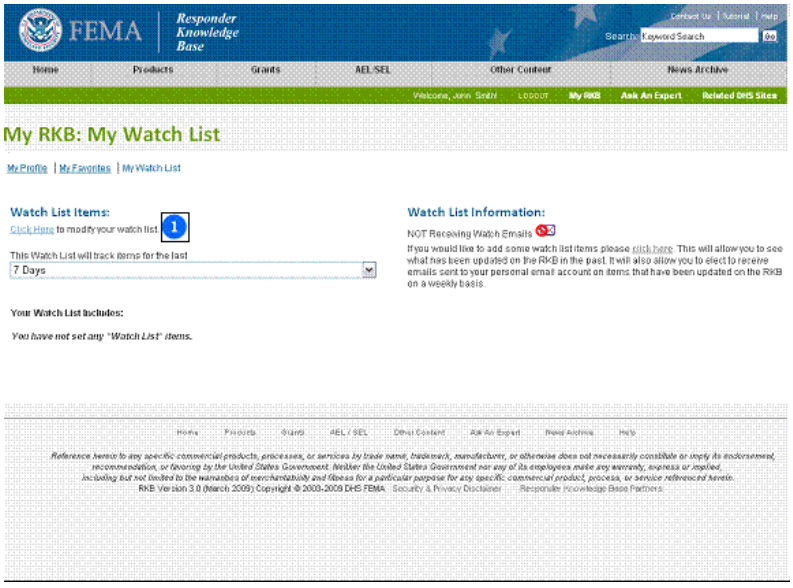
2 **Last 10 Keyword Searches:** This displays the last ten keyword searches made.

3 **Last 10 Product Comparisons:** This displays the last ten product comparisons made.

My Watch List

The **My Watch List** feature allows a registered RKB user to choose specific item categories that will allow them to be notified when an item has been created, updated, or modified in the RKB.

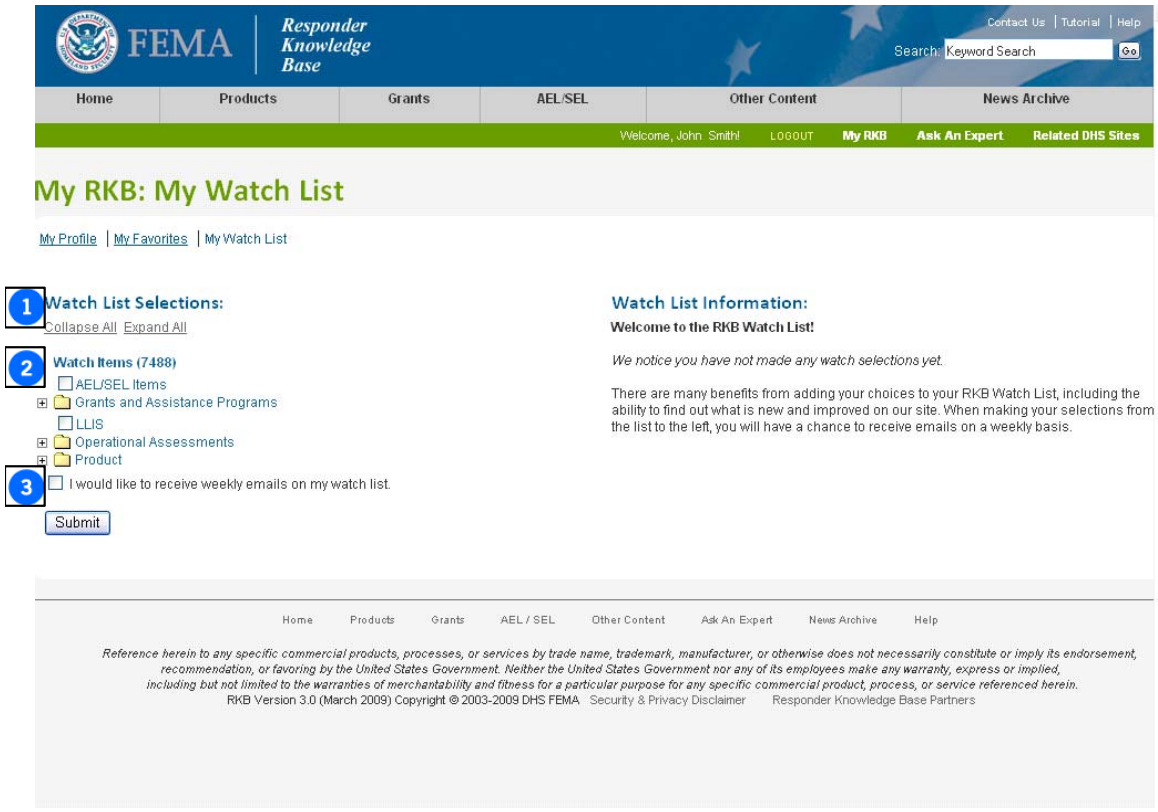
By clicking on the **Click Here** link under the **Watch List Items** section, a user will be redirected to the **Watch List Selections** page where they will be able to select or modify the items in their list.



1 **Watch List Selection link:** Selecting the **Click Here** link under this section will take a user to the **Watch List Selection** page.

The **Watch List Selections** page allows the user to select and/or unselect unlimited items for the **Watch List**. This page gives the user the option to collapse all or expand all of the selections tree a user can open individual records by clicking on ⊞ to expand the selection and ⊟ to collapse the selection tree. This allows for easier viewing of the many RKB items available for tracking. By clicking on the check boxes, the user is able to select and/or unselect each item.

At the bottom of the page, there is a check box that will allow the user to opt-in to receive weekly email notifications when the selected items have been updated or modified.



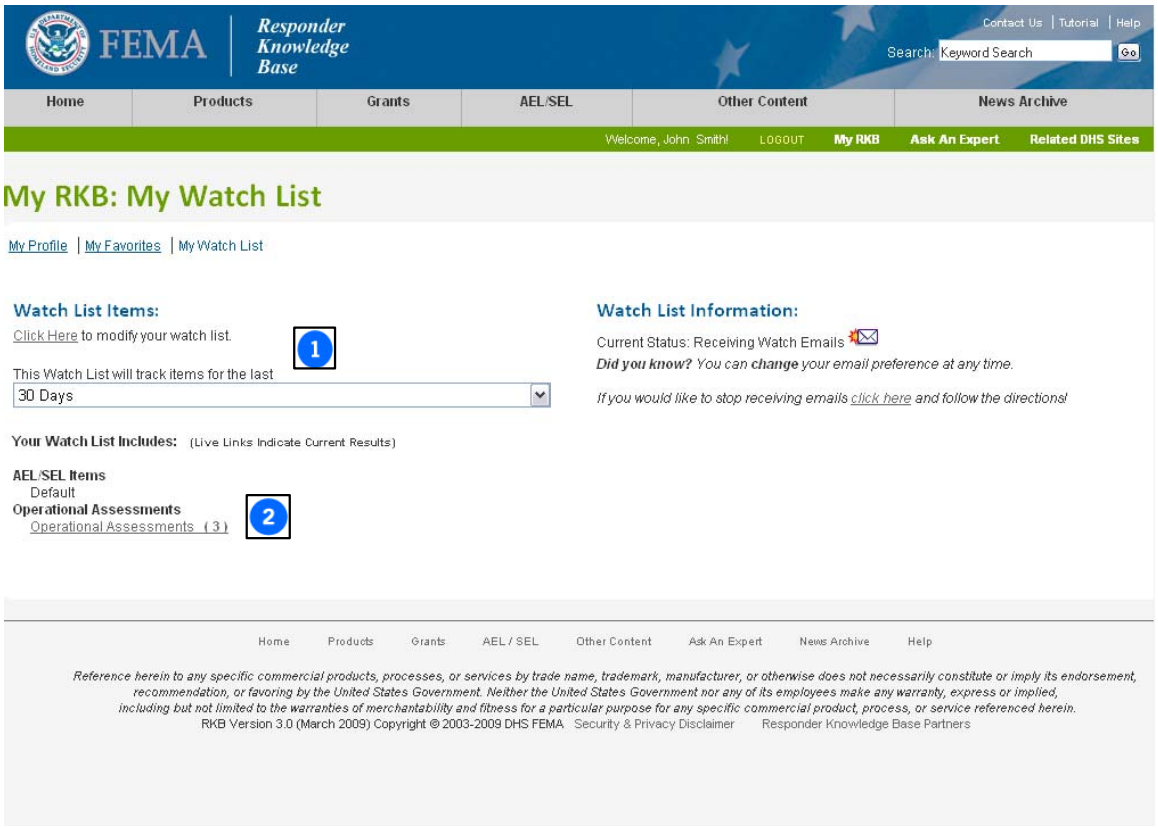
1 **Watch List Selection Collapse All or Expand All Selections:** Allows the user the option to collapse all or expand all of the selection tree at one time.

2 **Watch List Selection Tree:** Shows the many items available to select for tracking.

3 **Weekly Emails Checkbox:** This allows the user to opt-in to receive weekly email notifications when the selected items have been updated or modified.

Once the desired items for tracking have been selected in the **Watch List Selection** page, the main **Watch List** page will list them out. By selecting the length of time in the dropdown menu under the **Watch Items List**, the user will select a period of time (7, 14, 30, 90 or 180 days) and be able to see the number items that have been changed, and what has been updated or modified, in the selected content sections of the RKB.

For example, under the **Operational Assessments** section below, there is a line with an active link in the category indicating that it has been updated. There will also be a number to the right indicating how many items in that category have been updated or modified.



1 **Length of Track Time Dropdown:** This dropdown selects a period of time (7, 14, 30, 90 or 180 days) that the user would like to track a specific item.

2 **Indicator for Number of Changes:** This link indicates that a change has been made and shows the number of items that have been modified or updated in the selected period of track time (7, 14, 30, 90 or 180 days).

Additional Features

User Opinions

The **User Opinion** feature assists a registered RKB user find a fellow RKB responder who has volunteered their direct experience with a specific product or training course. Any product or training course that has a user opinion available will display a link indicating that there is a user (or users) that has volunteered an opinion in the **Knowledge Links** box in the item's content display page in the RKB.

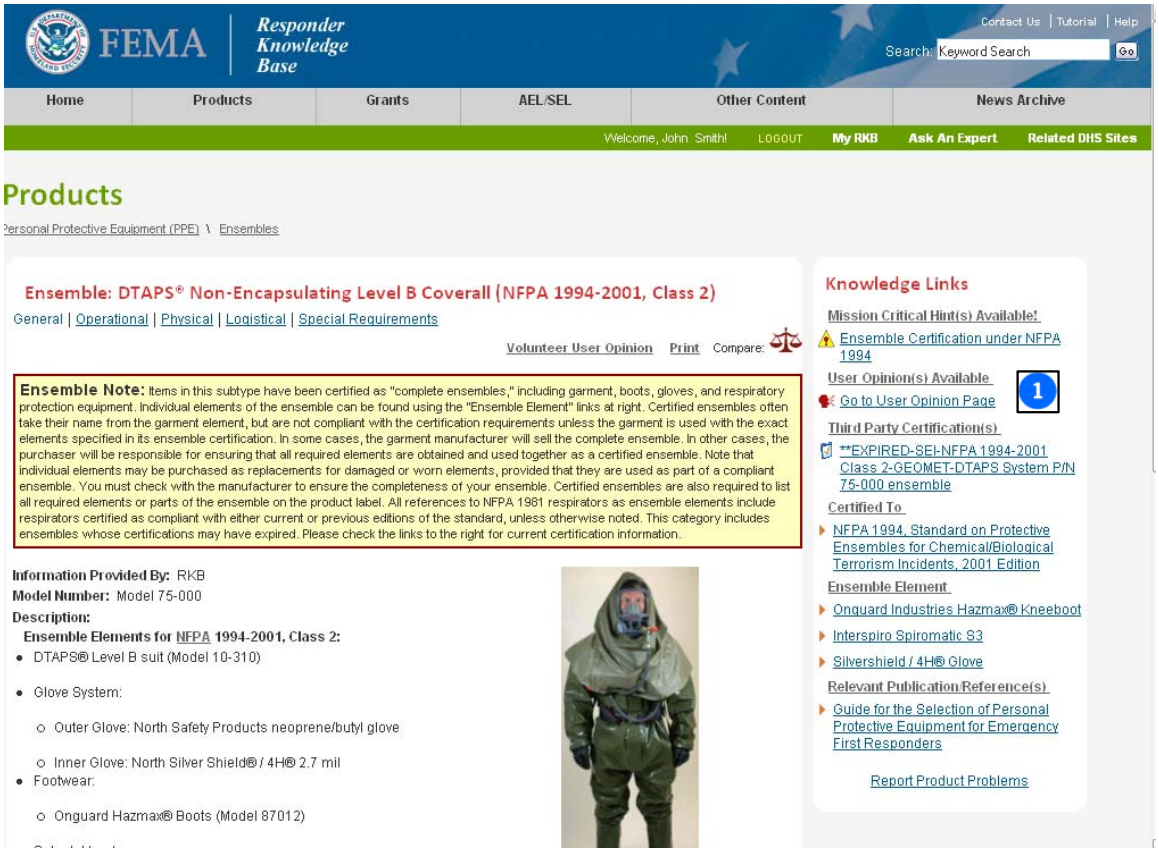
Only registered RKB users who have responder status can submit to and/or utilize this feature.

It is important to further highlight that the RKB simply sends a message on the behalf of the opinion seeker to the opinion provider letting them know that a RKB user has a question. It is the opinion provider's responsibility to get back to the opinion seeker (by email, phone, etc.) and answer the question. The RKB does not publish the name(s) or contact information for these opinion providers - instead, it displays these opinion providers by their job function and geographic location. An opinion seeker can pick the one that they feel may best suit their needs, and initiate a message with their question to the opinion provider.

The following sections in this tutorial will detail this feature.

Determining if an Opinion Provider Exists

Not all products and training courses have opinion providers available. As the RKB grows, so does the number of opinion providers. On some content display pages, a link for **User Opinion(s) Available** will be shown in the **Knowledge Links** box. This indicates that one or more responders on the RKB have volunteered to provide user opinions about the item that is being viewed. Clicking on the **Go to User Opinion Page** link will open a separate window for the **Request User Opinions** page, used to contact opinion providers, as shown in the next step.

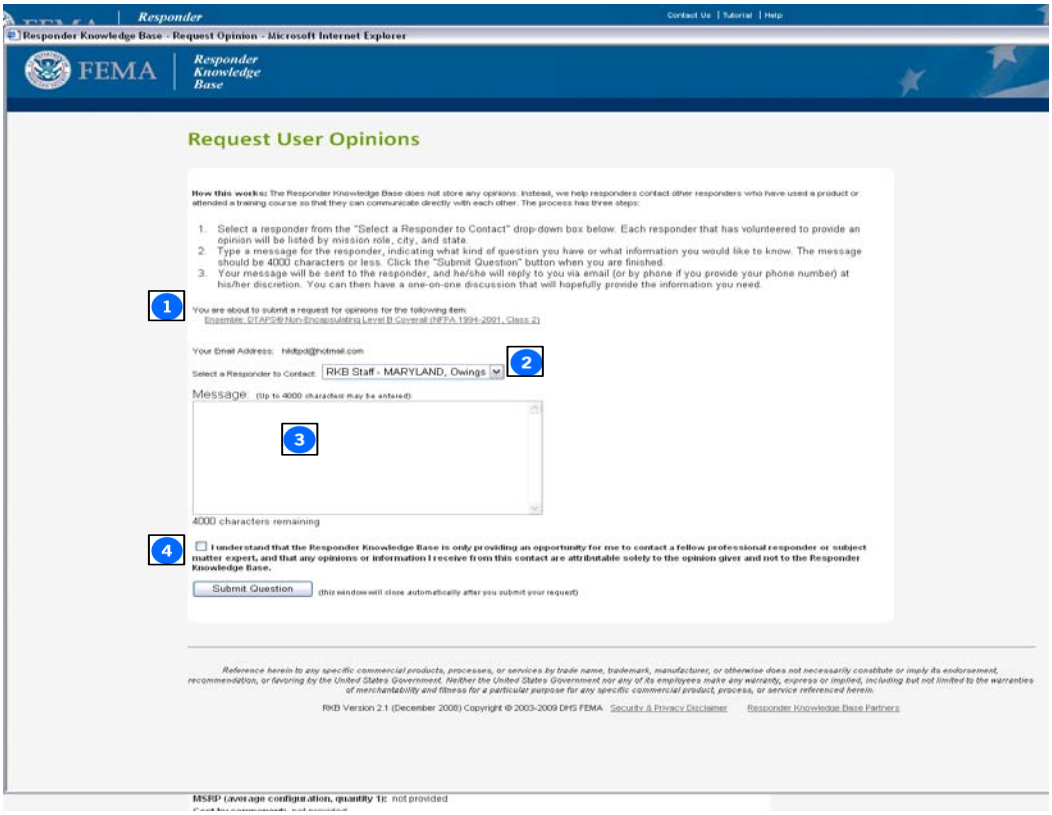


1 **User Opinion(s) Available:**
Click the "User Opinion(s) Available" link to request a user opinion about this product.

Contacting a User Opinion Provider

The **Request User Opinions** page allows the opinion seeker to choose from a list of responders by their role and location to be sure that the opinion provider uses the item in the same manner that the opinion seeker will. The opinion seeker then has the ability to type a message (e.g., a specific question or a request to be contacted), which will then be forwarded via email to the selected opinion provider. By including as much pertinent information in the question as possible (i.e. intended use, frequency of use, environment used in, etc…) the opinion seeker should then receive an answer tailored to their needs.

The RKB protects the user opinion providers so that they do not get buried in emails. For this reason, the RKB will try to limit the number of requests for opinions sent to the opinion providers. Depending on the number of queries received on any given product or training, most queries sent out are answered promptly by the opinion providers. If an opinion seeker is having difficulty receiving feedback from an opinion provider, there is the option to contact the RKB directly through the **Feedback** feature located in the **Contact Us** section, located above the **Keyword Search** box on any RKB page.



1 Product Identification:
Confirm that this is the product or training course of interest.

2 Choose a Responder:
Choose the responder that may best suit the geographic or responder type status to answer the question.

3 Message Area:
Type the question and any other pertinent information in this field.

4 Submit Question:
Click **Submit Question**.

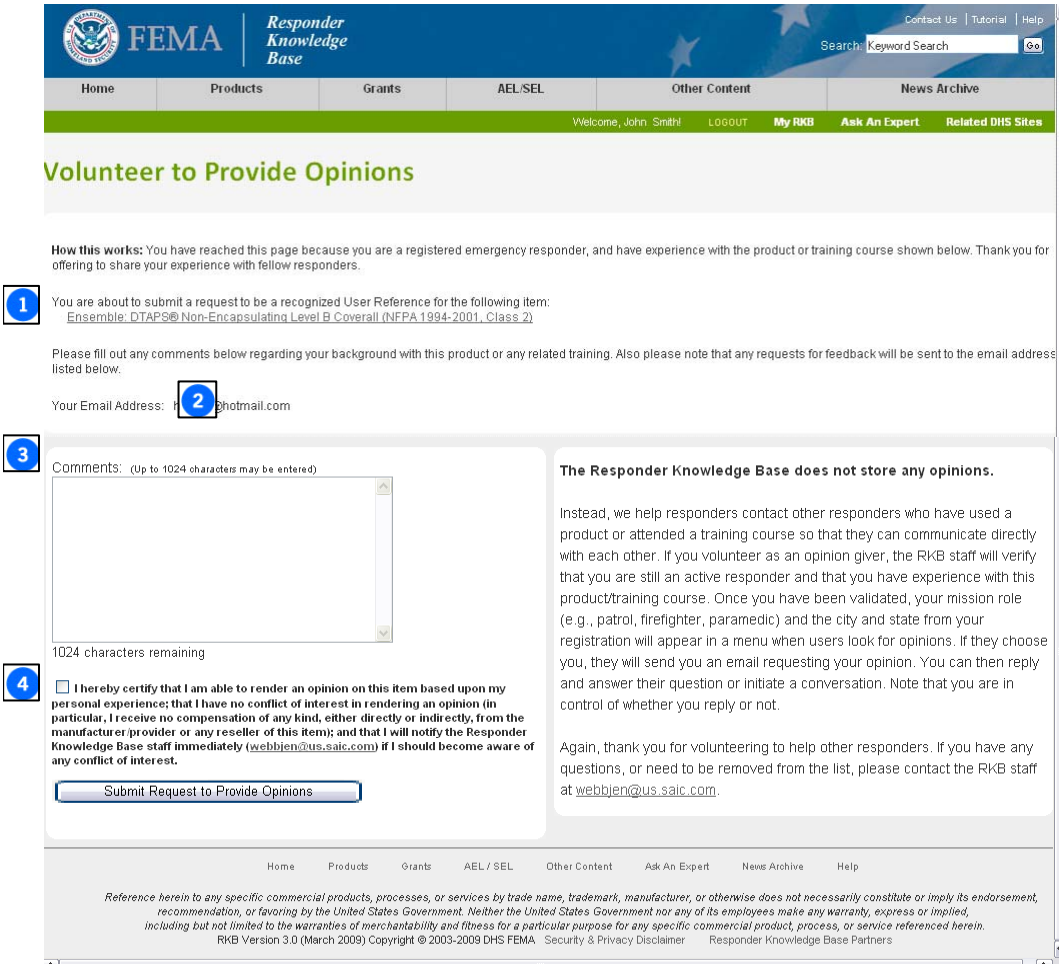
Volunteering as a User Opinion Provider

The RKB is always interested in obtaining additional responders to volunteer their user opinions. Volunteering as an opinion provider is easy. Each product or training course content display page has a link for this purpose, as shown below. Clicking on this link will open the **Volunteer to Provide Opinions** page. Once completed and submitted, the RKB staff verifies the user's registration. Once approved, the user will then become one of the many responders who have volunteered to help their peers make better equipment decisions.

1 **Volunteer User Opinion:**
Option to volunteer a user opinion for use on the RKB.

Registering as an Opinion Provider

Clicking on the **Volunteer to Provide Opinions** link will take the user to the page below. When volunteering to supply a user opinion, the user should ensure that the product or training course is one about which they can give an opinion. Second, the user should verify the email account on record with the RKB is current, since this is the method the RKB uses to notify the opinion provider of the opinion requests. Next, the comment section should be filled out with a brief synopsis of how the product was used/when the course was taken. Finally, the RKB asks that the volunteering user certify that they have no conflict of interest, or any situation, that would prevent them from giving an impartial opinion.



1 **Product Identification:** Confirm that this is a product or training course that has been used/taken.

2 **Confirm Email:** Confirm this is a current email address.

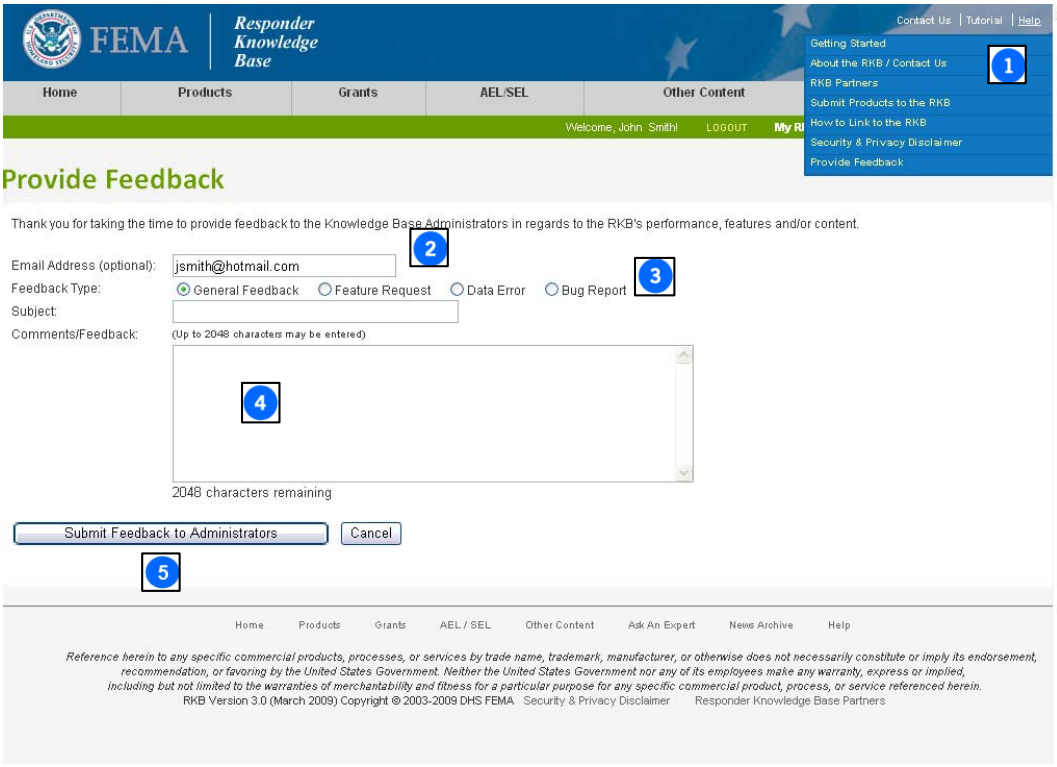
3 **Comments:** Provide a brief synopsis of how the product was used/when the course was taken

4 **Certify Opinion:** Certify the ability to provide an opinion about this item.

Feedback

By placing the mouse pointer over the **Help** link in the upper right-hand corner of any RKB page, the **Feedback** selection will be available in the dropdown menu. The **Feedback** link is available only to registered RKB users. This form may be used to submit general site questions and suggestions. When submitting feedback, the email field will be pre-populated. Choose the best **Feedback Type** for the inquiry and then type the comment/feedback in the **Comment/Feedback** field. Clicking **Submit** will submit the feedback to the RKB. The RKB staff checks these messages daily, and the user will be contacted within 5 business days regarding their feedback/comment. However, the resolution of some items may require additional time, depending on the complexity of the issue.

Additionally, the there is a link to the **Feedback** section of the RKB in the **Ask an Expert** section, which is discussed in the next section of this tutorial.



1 **Feedback Link:**
The **Feedback** link is available on every page of the RKB site in the drop-down menu under **Help**.

2 **Email Address:**
The email address will be automatically populated with the current user's email address.

3 **Feedback Type:**
Select the applicable feedback category.

4 **Comments/Feedback:**
Enter the comment/feedback in this field.

5 **Submit Question:**
Click **Submit Question** to forward onto the RKB staff.

Ask an Expert

The **Ask an Expert** feature can be accessed on any record page in the green menu bar in the upper right-hand side. This feature is available for registered RKB users with general questions about equipment, certifications, standards, or other related topics that are not answered by the content of the website. The RKB has a network of subject matter experts who are available to attempt to provide answers to these questions. The RKB staff checks these messages daily, and the user will be contacted within 5 business days regarding their question. However, the resolution of some questions may require additional time, depending on the complexity of the issue.

Hint: Many questions that are asked frequently of the RKB have been catalogued in the **Frequently Asked Questions** page. It is recommended that before a user submits an **Ask an Expert** question, they ensure that it has not already been discussed in the **Frequently Asked Questions**.

1 **Ask an Expert:** This option is available on all RKB pages in the green navigation bar.

2 **Frequently Asked Questions Link:** The **Frequently Asked Questions** section available through the **Ask an Expert** Page.

3 **Feedback Link:** The **Feedback** link is available on the **Ask an Expert** page as well as every page of the RKB site in the drop-down menu under **Help**

4 **Question Field:** Enter the question in this field.

5 **Submit Question:** Click **Submit Question** to forward onto the RKB staff.