

UT Health Science Center: RS203 - Critical Freezer Inventory and Audit	
Version 1	Publication Date: 01/10/2023

Objective

To identify and implement controls and prevent loss of critical research specimens stored in freezers covered by the State of Tennessee's Property Program. To implement this state requirement UTHSC must maintain an inventory of critical freezers that is audited annually and maintain a program to prevent loss of specimens due to freezer failure.

Scope

Research specimens collected in support of UTHSC research protocols.

Roles

UTHSC Principal Investigators, Supervisors, or Managers:

- Must create and inventory of critical freezers that contain research specimens that are to be insured against loss.
- Must mitigate the risk of specimen loss due to freezer failure by adopting measures such as alarms, remote alarms, and establishment of an Emergency Response Plan to be followed in the event of freezer failure.
- Must provide the Office of Research Safety Affairs with information about critical freezers (e.g., manufacturer, model, etc.).
- Must identify critical freezers to be maintained on backup power.
- Should provide for the regular cleaning and maintenance of freezers.
- Should determine if freezers need to be replaced by monitoring the condition and service-life.
- Should maintain an accurate inventory of materials stored in critical freezers.

Office of Research Safety Affairs must:

- Facilitate an annual audit of critical freezers to ensure that the inventory is up to date.
- Provide the results of the annual audit of critical freezers to the University of Tennessee System Office of Risk Management.
- Provide UTHSC personnel with information about this procedure and its requirements.

Procurement Services must:

- Notify the Office of Research Safety Affairs of new freezers purchased by UTHSC personnel.

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Definitions

Critical freezer: Freezers that contain research specimens the loss of which would be detrimental to research or the institution by merit of the value of those materials.

Procedure

- I. Principal Investigators must create an inventory of critical freezers in accordance with the UTHSC Critical Freezer Inventory Guidelines.
- II. Principal Investigators must participate in the annual Critical Freezer Audit by updating information about freezers containing research specimens as requested in the UTHSC Critical Freezer Inventory Guidelines.
- III. Principal Investigators must determine if backup power is needed for specific freezers in case of power failure and ensure that critical freezers are services with backup power.
- IV. Principal Investigators must install centralized monitoring systems or alarms that can be monitored if a freezer fails.
- V. Principal Investigators must develop and implement an Emergency Response Plan to identify individuals responsible for addressing issues involving critical freezers, such as freezer failure.
- VI. The Office of Research Safety Affairs must initiate an annual audit of critical freezer in the UTHSC inventory to ensure the accuracy of the inventory and that an emergency response plan is in place.

Penalties/Disciplinary Action for Non-Compliance

Research specimens stored in freezers not included in the inventory will not be insured.

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Responsible Official & Additional Contacts

Subject Matter	Office Name	Telephone Number (xxx) xxx-xxxx	Email/Web Address
Policy Clarification and Interpretation	University of Tennessee System Office of Risk Management	865-974-0980	Pamela Jeffreys, Director of Risk Management pjeffrey@utk.edu
Policy Training	UTHSC Office of Research Safety Affairs	901-448-6114	labsafety@uthsc.edu
UTHSC Freezer Inventory Program	UTHSC Office of Research Safety Affairs	901-448-6114	labsafety@uthsc.edu

Related Policies/Guidance Documents

UTHSC Freezer Inventory Guidelines