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Emergency Backup Plans for the Cell Bank stored at the Cell Culture Facility!

The centennial of the 1906 earthquake reminds us of the need to safeguard our research in the event of another great earthquake on the San Andreas or Hayward faults. The Cell Culture Facility (CCF) maintains a cryogenic cell bank for the convenience of UCSF researchers, currently storing around 80,000 vials in ℓN_2 freezers. These samples include irreplaceable cell lines essential to the research efforts at UCSF. The CCF is working on a plan to secure these samples in the event of an emergency.

The first phase of the plan, implemented in fall 2005, was replacing 40 year old liquid nitrogen tanks with new, state-of-the-art freezers from Pacific Science. These freezers have the lowest ℓN_2 consumption of any on the market today, thus can maintain vapor phase -150ºC for up to 10 days without attendance or power.

The second phase of the plan, implemented in spring 2006, was to place the CCF on retainer with Pacific BioMaterials (http://www.pbmmi.com/index.html) so that the freezers could be moved to a secure facility in Fresno. The truck will arrive as soon as possible, access the buildings (HSW S1000 and Genentech Hall S212) as soon as they are cleared for entry, move the freezers out of the lab and into the truck. The truck has backup power and ℓN_2 supply on board to maintain the freezers during transport. The facility in Fresno has backup power (generators) and a supply of ℓN_2 as well. The freezers can be kept at Pacific BioMaterials as long as is needed.

The third phase of the plan, to be implemented in late 2006/early 2007, is to provide a safe place out of the area for long term storage of very critical samples. The CCF will be contacting researchers and administrators of the cell/tissue/ sample banks on campus with information about this long term storage.

We encourage researchers to store part of their parental stocks with us. Having important samples stored in more than one place reduces the risk of loss. The CCF keeps track of your samples and will freeze and thaw cells as requested. Please go to http://www.ccf.ucsf.edu for more information!