



Disaster Recovery Planning for Research Programs

The impact of Hurricane Katrina on academic research programs was a dramatic reminder of the potential for disruption from natural disasters to critical programs and research careers.

The UCSF campus and Medical Center emergency preparedness programs will participate in a joint disaster drill exercise on November 15, 2006. The exercise scenario, which is organized by the National Guard's training and disaster drill division, will duplicate the details of San Francisco's 1906 earthquake. As part of the Homeland Security program, the National Guard is responsible to develop and implement annual disaster exercises based on the national scenario priorities. These priorities include a combination of natural hazards and terrorist events.

Research programs can use the disaster exercise as a reminder to review your Emergency Action Plan and to update information related to protection of critical assets – particularly irreplaceable living specimens such as animals, plants, stocks, cell lines, DNA constructs; specialized equipment, databases, and hardcopy notebooks or manuscripts.

Recommended elements of a research recovery program include:

- Copy and distribute irreplaceable materials to sites outside the Bay Area;
- Familiarity with which lab appliances are supported by back-up generators, and plans to maintain the research materials in appliances without back-up power;
- Duplicate copies of drawings, diagrams, plans, or specifications of unique equipment or experimental apparatus should be maintained in the event that the scientific equipment needs to be reconstructed;
- Bookshelves, files, appliances, equipment, etc are bolted, braced or tied down so they will be neither life safety hazards nor damaged and lost;
- Consider a plan to relocate graduate students, post-docs, and research staff with colleagues outside the Bay Area to continue research projects;
- Identify who is responsible to respond to the research lab to assess damage to the project and take actions to preserve the research. Additionally, develop a plan for delayed assessment and response since building access may be restricted until the structural safety has been confirmed and transportation disruptions may also limit staffs' abilities to reach the research site.
- Have contact information for vendors as part of your emergency plan;
- Have contact information for program officers. PIs are responsible to notify funding agency if a disaster or other event interferes with their ability to fulfill a grant commitment.

If you have any questions about the upcoming drill or disaster recovery planning, please contact Susan Garritson, UCSF Bioterrorism Coordinator, 502-2871, Susan.Garritson@ucsf.edu