University of Cincinnati
Enterprise Risk Management
Guidelines for Ultra Low Research Freezer Alarms

I. All freezer alarms must be web based, in order for the alarm to be able to contact the person(s) responsible for the freezer contents.

II. Contact facilities management prior to purchasing/installing a new research freezer, in order to be certain that the power requirement of the freezer is available in the building housing the freezer.

III. Prior to the alarming of the freezer(s), the department must develop a plan of action, in the event of an alarm activation.

IV. Separate research into more than one freezer, whenever possible, in order to protect your research, in case of a single freezer failure;

V. Duplicate research samples wherever practical, and store duplicate samples in a separate freezer location. Ideally the second location is on a separate power grid line;

VI. A written Plan of Action should be created and maintained that includes:

- Designation of primary and back-up contacts who will respond in the event of an alarm. Contacts must be prepared to respond 24/7, 365 days a year;
- Primary and back-up contacts must provide cell phone numbers and email addresses that also sync to their cell phones;
- Contact information must be updated on the freezer(s), as well as in the alarming system on a regularly scheduled basis, as contacts/phone numbers and email addresses may change;
- A business continuity process that details where to relocate freezer contents, in the event of a freezer failure or extended power disruption (for example, beyond 2-3 hours or when internal temperature approaches a pre-designated level);
- Designate the person(s) or vendor responsible to perform scheduled maintenance of the alarming system, such as re-booting the system, checking the battery, checking the sensors and checking the signal strength;
- Require maintenance checks be documented and visible.

*Freezer alarms can be a valuable tool to use in the protection of your research stored in ultralow freezers, but they are only a tool. In order to be most effective, the alarms need to have the appropriate Plan of Action in place, and the plan must be tested. Inevitably, the alarm will sound at 3 am on a Saturday morning, on a holiday, or when the lab has been closed for several days. An alarm that you do not hear or respond to when it activates is useless and may result in the loss of a lifetime of significant research. Don't let this happen to you!*