

## Toolbox Safety Topic

### Lockout/Tagout

The different types of machinery in the workplace do their work by means of energy – electrical, mechanical, hydraulic, or pneumatic, etc. Releasing this energy makes the machines run, which is very useful, but not if the energy is released at the wrong time or if you are in the way.

There are many examples of people being seriously injured or killed by machinery and electrical equipment. Often, these tragedies happen because people carelessly try to repair or maintain the equipment without making sure its energy source has been shut off. Many times the accident happens when another worker restarts the machine, not knowing that another worker is in the machine. To prevent this type of tragedy, OSHA developed a standard that has very specific procedures for shutting off machinery, for making sure it can't be operated after it's been shut off, and for warning employees to stay away from potential hazards. These procedures are called "lockout/tagout".

Lockout means much more than simply shutting off a machine by throwing a switch. When a machine has been locked out, it means:

- all energy to the machine has been shut off (there may be more than one type of energy)
- any energy that has been stored has been released or blocked
- the machine is literally locked out and cannot be restarted or released accidentally.

In lockout, a lock is placed on the part of the machine that controls the energy, such as a circuit breaker, switch, or valve. The lock itself cannot be used for any other purpose. That means you can't use just any lock you might find in the workplace to perform a lockout – in fact, all lockout locks should be of the same general appearance so people can easily recognize them for what they are (ex. by color, brand, etc.). The lock must be strong and sturdy enough to stay in place until it's time for it to be unlocked.

Most important, lockout can be performed only by employees who are trained and certified by the company to do so (known as "authorized" employees). The name of the authorized employee should appear on the lock or tag.

Affected employees are those whose job required them to operate equipment or be in an area where lockout/tagout might be required. They need to understand lockout procedures and why they are important. They should know never to perform a lockout themselves or try to restart locked out equipment.

Lockout involves certain specific procedures, including:

1. Preparing for lockout and notifying other employees that lockout is about to occur.
2. Turning off the equipment and isolating or releasing any stored energy.
3. Placing locks on the energy controls.
4. Testing the controls and electrical circuits to make sure the equipment can't be energized.

When the work is finished and the equipment is ready to be restarted, it's very important to follow proper start up procedures. These procedures include:

- Making sure all employees are a safe distance from the equipment.
- Removing all tools from the area.
- Re-installing any machine guards.
- Removing lockout devices and re-energizing the equipment.
- Notifying employees that equipment has been re-energized.

Accidents that occur with operating machinery are usually very serious, or even fatal. That's why lockout/tagout is so important, and why these procedures should always be followed. Additional training through Environmental Health and Safety Services is required to "authorize" employees in the lockout/tagout program.

**Any questions?**

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Conducted By: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

## Attendees

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