



SafetyAlert

We're Serious About Safety

Employee Safety – The Benefits of Lockout/Tagout

Dozens of workers are killed and more are seriously injured each year when employees fail to de-energize and lockout equipment before working on it. While many deaths result from electrocutions, workers have also been crushed and many have suffered amputations or other injuries.

The following types of energy need to be controlled through Lockout/Tagout procedures: electric, hydraulic, pneumatic, mechanical, heat, and pressurized liquids, vapors, steam and gases.

What is Lockout/Tagout?

Lockout/tagout is a method used to make certain that energy is not released, or equipment cycled, while someone is working on equipment. Activities covered include constructing, installing, setting up, adjusting, inspecting, modifying, lubricating, cleaning, unjamming, performing tool changes, and servicing equipment.

Turning off a power switch is not enough. You must complete thorough steps to ensure that equipment and machinery is first de-energized (preventing equipment from starting or moving), second, locked out (physically locking the control mechanism in the off or closed position); third, relieved of any stored energy (for example, bleeding air from a pneumatic hose), and finally tested to make sure the energy is off.

Employer Responsibility

Most employers are required to have a written Lockout/Tagout program. In addition, it is the responsibility of the employer to make sure that all employees are properly trained on Lockout/Tagout procedures and techniques. Training levels will vary based on the employees.

A **Lockout** device is usually a key or combination lock. The lock must be attached to an isolating device, circuit breaker, and/or switch to prevent turning on the energy source or equipment or releasing energy.

A **Tagout** device is a tag that must withstand at least 50 pounds of force. Use a tagout device only when you cannot lock out. The tag should have a label or sign that prohibits anyone from turning on the equipment or from removing the energy-isolating device without permission.



Lockout/Tagout Checklist

- Do you have a written lockout/tagout program tailored to your facilities needs?
- Do you have a complete listing of all machinery in your facility?
- Have hazard energy sources been identified for each machine or group of machines?
- Do you have lockout/tagout procedures written for each machine?
- Has training of employees been conducted (authorized, affected)?
- Have you certified that the training identifies each employee by name and date of training?
- Do employees follow full lockout/tagout procedures at all times?
- Have you conducted an annual inspection of all authorized employees on lock out/ tagout procedures?

Remember: Isolating and de-energizing potential energy sources saves lives, and prevents costly injuries.



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