

Lockout/Tagout – Even for Short Jobs

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

It can be tempting to skip a lockout procedure just to make a quick adjustment on a machine. This kind of thinking is a mistake. In fact, it can be a fatal mistake. Many workers have been killed when they left a machine running or skipped the lockout just to do a quick clean-up or adjustment.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

When you adjust or repairs to a machine, you might have to reach inside the machine, or otherwise place yourself in the danger zone. While you're doing these repairs, you can't assume your co-workers will see you or know that you're there. The result is they could turn on the equipment and you could be crushed, electrocuted or otherwise seriously injured. And if you're working with equipment that is activated by electronic sensors or directed by computers, it can move unexpectedly when triggered by movement.

Example

A sawmill employee was operating an automated stacker when he noticed a board out of place on the top of the bundle of lumber. He left his work station and went to the stack to try to straighten the board. He did not lock out the controls or energy sources for the equipment before he attempted the adjustment. He put himself in a position between the stack of lumber and a steel beam. Then he accidentally tripped the electric eye, which was supposed to sense when the stack was complete and ready to move. Rollers began to move, advancing the stack. The operator was slammed into the steel beam. He died of head and neck injuries.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Before anyone attempts to repair or adjust a machine, it must be shut down and isolated from energy sources so it cannot accidentally start up.

That's where lockout procedures come in. A lockout isolates the machine from energy sources which could cause it to operate or to

move. These sources include electrical, compressed air, hydraulic, fuel and others. Lockouts are also used to prevent the worker from being struck by materials moving through the machine or even through pipes or other conduits.

Become thoroughly acquainted with your company's lockout procedures. Here are the steps to a typical lockout:

- Identify all the sources of energy and how to control these sources.
- Notify all affected co-workers of the planned lockout.
- Shut down the machinery using the ordinary method such as throwing a switch or hitting a stop button.
- Isolate the machinery from all sources of energy by turning off main power switches, breakers and other controls.
- Place a lock on each of these switches and controls. Each lock is accompanied by a tag indicating who is doing the lockout.
- Release all potentially hazardous energy, including that in springs, rotating wheels, air pressure, raised loads, hydraulic pressure and other sources.
- Test the equipment to make sure all energy sources are disconnected. The switches are returned to the "off" position after testing.
- After the repairs or adjustments are done, remove the locks and tags and return the machine to service.

Even if lockout isn't part of your job function, you're still responsible for working safely around machinery. Know how your company's lockout system works and stay away from a locked and tagged machine.

FINAL WORD

A lockout is insurance against being struck by moving equipment while you are doing repairs or adjustments. Use it every time — even for quick jobs.

QUIZ

1. Lockout/tagout isolates the following sources of energy:

- a. Electrical
- b. Compressed Air
- c. Hydraulic
- d. Fueled
- e. All of the above

2. Who must you notify regarding planned lockout procedures?

- a. Only the supervisor
- b. All co-workers who might be affected
- c. No one

3. If the electrical power has been shut off to a piece of equipment, you know you'll be safe during maintenance or repair work.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

4. Even if you aren't required or authorized to lockout equipment, you still need to know how lockout/tagout works and how it affects you.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

There's a major project deadline looming, with a real push for productivity. In response, you have noticed some of your co-workers skipping lockout/tagout procedures and getting dangerously close to machinery while adjusting or clearing jams. You are worried someone could get hurt or killed. How and to whom would you express your concerns? What would you do?

BEFORE THE TALK

1. Print Attendance Sheet to pass around.
2. Lockout policies are specific to each workplace. Use this safety meeting as an opportunity to review yours and to make sure all affected workers are trained and informed. Bring a copy of your company's lockout policies for each employee.
3. It is important for everyone to understand the principles of lockout and tagout—even if these people are not working on the machinery. The message to be emphasized is never to tamper with a lock or tag, and never to attempt to start machinery that is locked or tagged.
4. Shift changes and absent workers can seriously complicate a lockout situation. Be ready to explain what should happen under these circumstances.
5. Not everyone is authorized to adjust or repair equipment, and not everyone is authorized to use lockout procedures. If there are members of your group who are authorized, ask them for examples of lockout and tagout procedures they regularly perform in the workplace.

AFTER THE TALK

PROVIDED FOLLOW-UP TO WORKERS THAT DID POORLY ON THE QUIZ

DATE: _____

OBSERVED WORKERS

DATE: _____

REFRESHER TRAINING

DATE: _____

OTHER (DESCRIBE)

DATE: _____

NOTES

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ANSWERS:

1. E 3. False
2. B 4. True

ATTENDANCE

[illegible]

INSTRUCTOR: _____ **DATE:** _____

SAFETY TALK: _____