Tools for Life – Weekly Health & Safety Meeting

Apollo — MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS — Building People Who Build Great Things

Home Healthy - Home Safe

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Lock Out Tag Out

According to OSHA, failure to control hazardous energy accounts for nearly 10 percent of serious accidents in many industries. Hazardous energy comes in various forms, including electricity, steam, high pressure water, and mechanical energy. Hazardous energy can be unpredictable, and it presents risks when handled improperly. To prevent accidents and injury from the release of hazardous energy, electrical workers need to be knowledgeable in lock/tagout procedures.

Lockout/tagout is the process of preventing the flow of any type of hazardous energy into equipment an employee may be working on. Lockout/tagout procedures are often implemented in instances where a machine needs to be shut down for repairs or cleaning. Lockout is the use of a lock to prevent equipment start-up. Tagout is the placement of a tag on an energy source to serve as a warning to not operate the piece of equipment. If an energy isolating device is capable of being locked out, the lockout system should be used. If, however, an energy isolating device is not capable of being locked out, a tagout system should be used. Here are procedures for controlling hazardous energy through lockout/tagout:

- **Identify potential hazardous energy sources that need to be isolated through lockout/tagout, and notify all employees.**
- **If the equipment is operating, shut it down.**
- **Operate the switch, valve, or other energy isolating devices so that the energy source is disconnected or isolated from the equipment.**
- **Lockout energy isolating devices with an assigned individual lock and/or OSHA approved tag.**
- **Make sure locks and tags have the strength and durability to withstand any conditions they may encounter, such as adverse weather.**
- **Restrain stored energy - such as that in capacitors, springs, rotating wheels, hydraulic systems, and air or water pressure - by methods such as grounding, repositioning, or blocking.**
- **After ensuring that no employees are exposed, attempt to turn on the equipment to test to make sure energy sources are disconnected and that the equipment will not operate. This is known as "try-out", a third step to ensure the protective system does indeed prevent the flow of energy.**
- **Make sure to return the operating controls to the neutral position after the test.**
- **The equipment is now locked out.**

SAFETY REMINDER: LOTO affects all workers on site, not just yours.

Discussion Points/Quiz Questions:

1. **When should you verify a system is locked out?**
2. **Can you lock a system in the "on" position?**