

Lockout - Tagout

Employers have a duty to protect workers both while using machinery and power tools for their intended purpose and when repairing and maintaining that equipment. The primary way of fulfilling that duty is through lockout/tagout procedures.

Lockout/tagout procedures ensure machinery and power tools are stopped and isolated from hazardous energy sources (e.g., electricity) and cannot be accidentally or inadvertently started. It is critical that workers understand the importance of lockout procedures.

Why is lockout important?

- **Lockout:** means to physically neutralize all energy sources in machinery or power tools, usually by using a locking mechanism.
- **Tagout:** is the method of alerting other persons that maintenance is occurring by attaching tags or signs to the locks with written information about the nature of the lockout.

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020, 10-6, outlines the requirements to de-energize and lock out machinery and power tools before performing maintenance, repair, testing or adjustment of the machinery or power tools.

The purpose of lockout is to prevent an energy-isolating device (such as a switch, circuit breaker or valve) from accidentally or inadvertently being operated while workers are performing maintenance on machinery or equipment. Lockout makes sure machinery or power tools won't start and injure a worker.

What does lockout apply to?

Lockout requirements apply to all machines, equipment, tools, transport pipes, high pressure lines and electrical installations. Lockout needs to be considered any time a machine is being handled outside normal work operating conditions, by a person who could be injured if the machine is started by mistake.

Responsibilities

Employers are responsible to provide:

- Written lockout procedures specific to each machine; a safety lock and key to a worker who may have to lock out a machine;
- Training and supervision of workers.

Workers who work on machinery or equipment requiring lockout are required to follow written safe work procedures.

Training and Education

All workers should understand what lockout is in general, what the locks/tags mean and the procedures to follow if they want to operate equipment or power tools that have been locked out. In addition, any workers who may need to lock out a particular piece of equipment should be trained in the written procedure for that equipment.

General Guidelines

- Lockout/tagout procedures shall be followed to ensure machinery and power tools are stopped and isolated from hazardous energy sources and cannot be accidentally or inadvertently started.
- Treat all machinery as if it can start automatically. Always switch equipment to local control before isolating and tagging is carried out.
- Warning tags should never be misused or used for anything other than their designed purpose.
- Only the person who attaches the lock or locking tie and warning tag should remove it.
- If you are unsure about how to lock out, ask your supervisor.

source: adapted from Sunrise Health Region, Lockout/Tagout Procedures Safety Talk, February 4, 2013

Safety Talk Discussion

Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!