

Risk Manager

Answers, resources and information to help assess and reduce risk

Lockout/Tagout: Putting a Lock on Safety By Keith Myers

Lockout/Tagout is a process that covers the servicing and maintenance of machines and equipment in which the unexpected start-up or the release of stored energy could cause injury to employees. A Lockout/Tagout program can be a very helpful safety program for employees who deal with constructing, installing, adjusting, inspecting and servicing machines and equipment. Here are some keys to having a successful Lockout/Tagout Program:

Know the difference between an authorized employee and affected employee:

- An Authorized employee is an employee who completes the maintenance or service to the equipment or machines. The lockout/tagout process is designed for their safety.
- An Affected employee is an employee who performs their job duties in the area where the procedure is taking place.

The machine or equipment should always be de-energized and locks or tags applied to the energy isolation device when:

- The employee must either remove or bypass machine guards or other safety devices.
- The employee is required to place any part of his or her body in contact with the point of operation of the operational machine or equipment.
- The employee is required to place any part of his or her body into a danger zone associated with a machine operating cycle.

A written lockout/tagout procedure should consist of:

- Preparation of shutdown
- Shut down the equipment
- Equipment isolation
- Application of the lockout/tagout devices
- Release of stored energy
- Verifying equipment isolation

The application of devices should be used when:

- All energy-isolating devices are to be locked, tagged or both.
- Only standardized devices can be used and they are not to be used for anything else.
- Use a lockout device if your lock cannot be placed directly on the energy control.
- When lockout is used, every employee in the work crew must attach his personal lock.

What should be done when verifying equipment isolation:

- Make sure all danger areas are clear of personnel.
- Verify that the main disconnect switch or circuit breaker can't be moved to the on position.
- Press all start buttons and other activating controls on the equipment itself and return controls to the off position when the testing is complete.

Make sure to wear shoes that have non-conductive soles when dealing with electricity.

All Lockout/Tagout devices should be: Durable, Standardized, Substantial and Identifiable.

The implementation and enforcement of a lockout/tagout program may help ensure your employees safety when dealing with constructing, installing, setting up, adjusting, modifying, inspecting and servicing machines and equipment.

For additional information or training on best practices and safety management within your school entity, please contact Director of Risk Management Sharon Orr at (866) 401-6600, ext. 7152 or sorr@cmregent.com.