

LOCK OUT TAG OUT

Anyone who operates, cleans, services, adjusts, and repairs machinery or equipment should be aware of the hazards associated with that machinery. Any powered machinery or electrical equipment that can move in a way that would put people in danger is a hazard that can be prevented by following locking or tagging procedures. Failure to lock out or tag power sources on equipment can result in electrocutions, amputations, and other serious-sometimes fatal-accidents.

Just this past week there were 4 stories in the news about workers who died doing their job related to not having control of hazardous energy. What are the most common causes of these accidents?

- The machine or piece of equipment was not completely shut off before a maintenance or repair operation. Not only must the machine be turned off but also the power source that goes to it.
- The machine was turned on accidentally, either out of carelessness or because the person who turned it on didn't realize that another worker was there and could get hurt.
- The machine wasn't working correctly but wasn't fixed, turned off, locked or tagged, and someone who didn't know about the problem used it.
- Moving equipment wasn't blocked.
- Safety procedures were inadequate or hadn't been properly explained.

Remember the dangers and be on your guard around any machinery and moving equipment. Even if you don't operate the machinery, you could get caught in it and injured if it isn't properly disconnected. So what can you do to prevent accidental injury from moving machinery?

- Ensure you know the hazardous energy associated with your equipment prior to doing any work on it.
- Ensure you know all the energy that could affect the task (electric, gravity, water, pneumatic, hydraulic, steam, etc)
- Ensure you control the accidental release of the energy prior to working on the equipment through lockout, tag out or alternative measures identified for your specific equipment.
- Never reach into moving equipment. In even the blink of an eye you could have a life changing injury.
- Test the energy after you believe it to be isolated. This is one of the most overlooked steps and probably the most important. Employees think they have isolated the energy at the source, but it isn't for one reason or another.
- Be aware of your personal safety and the safety of others when working with or around moving equipment and machinery. Always follow proper lockout and tag out procedures, even for a quick or minor repair!