

MARION COUNTY SAFETY MANUAL ANNEX G – LOCKOUT/TAG-OUT

Overview

Many employees and supervisors are under the misleading impression that if you simply turn off or unplug a piece of equipment, then it will prevent any unexpected startups. What is not taken into consideration is that another employee may come along and start the machine up inadvertently, or that the machine may have stored energy that could cause the machine's parts to move. This simple misconception is the cause of many unnecessary deaths each year. Having a written lockout/tag-out procedure will assist in preventing these accidents and deaths each year.

Lockout Procedures

The key point of any lockout/tag-out procedure is to completely shutdown machines before repair, maintenance and cleaning. Other employees should be instructed not to touch any equipment that is locked and tagged unless you are responsible for working on it and are absolutely sure that the power is disconnected. Below you will find six (6) simple steps of the shutdown process:

1. Before Shutdown: The authorized employee must know the type and magnitude of energy, the hazard of the energy to be controlled and the method or means to control the energy. The authorized employee must notify all affected employees of the lockout.
2. Shutdown: The authorized employee shuts down the machine or equipment by the normal stopping procedure (pressing the stop button, moving the switch to the off position, etc).
3. Isolation: The main power switches, circuits or other sources of energy are moved to the off position or otherwise rendered inoperative.
4. Lockout: Locks are placed on switches or other energy sources in the 'safe' or 'off' position. During group lockout, all members of the group must add their own locks to the group lockout devices. Never place a lock inside another employee's lock. Warning tags should be placed with each lock.
5. Energy Release: All potential hazardous stored or residual energy is relieved, disconnected or otherwise made safe by repositioning, blocking, bleeding down, etc.
6. Testing: After confirming that no personnel are exposed, and checking again to verify the power is disconnected, the authorized employee will operate the push button or other normal operating controls to make certain the equipment will not operate. **CAUTION turn all operating controls to 'neutral' or 'off' position after the test.** The equipment is now locked out.

Tag-Out Procedures

Tag-out is the process of placing tags on machinery to warn workers and other employees not to start or operate the equipment. It usually occurs after lockout and is a way of making sure that all other workers know to stay away from the machinery. Tag-out is not a substitute for lockout, but in instances where lockout is impossible, tag-out can be very important in warning other employees that equipment should not be used. Tag-out alone should only be used with approval from a department head or supervisor.

Lockout/Tag-Out Removal

When maintenance or service is complete, the authorized employee who installed the lock on the machine or equipment is the only authorized person to remove the lock. Once maintenance, servicing or repairs are complete, the following steps should be followed in getting equipment back on line:

1. Check around the machine to make sure that all maintenance items have been removed and that the equipment components are operationally intact.
2. Check the work area to insure that all employees are removed from the area and cannot enter during this phase.
3. Verify that the controls are in the neutral position.
4. Remove the lockout device and re-energize the machine.
5. Notify the affected employees that servicing is complete and the machine is ready for use.

Training

All employees should receive training on the lockout/tag-out standard to some degree, depending on their job responsibilities. The degree of training should be determined by the department supervisor in conjunction with the County Risk Manager.