LockOut TagOut Meeting Kit

Lockout/Tagout (LOTO) is a safety procedure used to ensure proper shut-off and prevent the inability to start up machines prior to completion of maintenance or repair work. It is important that training takes place for employees authorized to carry out LOTO procedures as well as employees who will be affected by the use of these practices.

THE DANGERS

OSHA reports that the number of Lockout/Tagout (LOTO) deaths each year ranges from 150 to 200 people. Additionally, each year about 60,000 LOTO accidents occur.

Lockout Devices hold energy-isolation devices in a safe or “off” position. They provide protection by preventing machines or equipment from becoming energized because they are positive restraints that no one can remove without a key or other unlocking mechanism, or through extraordinary means, such as bolt cutters.

Tagout Devices by contrast, are prominent warning devices that an authorized employee fastens to energy-isolating devices to warn employees not to reenergize the machine while they service or maintain it. Tagout devices are easier to remove and, by themselves, provide employees with less protection than lockout devices.

HOW TO PROTECT EMPLOYEES

Before employees attempts to repair or adjust a machine, it must be shut down and isolated from energy sources so it cannot accidentally start up. That’s where lockout procedures come in. A lockout isolates the machine from energy sources which could cause it to operate or to move.

These sources include electrical, compressed air, hydraulic, fuel and others. Lockouts are also used to prevent the worker from

being struck by materials moving through the machine or even through pipes or other conduits.

Those employees affected by safety procedures of lockout / tagout are:

- **Authorized Employee** – An employee who manually locks/tags machines or equipment to perform servicing or maintenance.
- **Affected Employee** – An affected employee is one who is not qualified to lock/tag a piece of equipment which may need maintenance or servicing. An affected employee can also be a person who works in/around an area where the equipment may be locked/tagged out.

CATEGORIES OF LOTO TRAINING

- **Maintenance and Testing:** Training allows for all the relevant parties to assess any potential issues with the equipment. Training can be a perfect time to troubleshoot your technology while using the LOTO procedure. LOTO is about reducing the risks of hazardous energy. Training directs focus, and with that, you can anticipate hazards from damaged or improperly functioning equipment.

- **Increased Familiarity with Relevant Devices:** It is easy to take it for granted that employees will know the right way to use LOTO devices, but when it comes to safety, you never want to rely on assumptions. The best way to know that everyone using the tags and locks correctly is to train everyone on the usage. Not only how things are meant to affix to equipment and machinery but also the mistakes that can be made.

This is also very important for getting workers familiar with common misconceptions about the devices. How tags can fall off and the devices that require group lockouts.

- **Improved Issue Identification:** With everyone trained on the expectations and usage of lockout/tagout practices, there will be more people that can tell when something’s not

right. A team is only as strong as its weakest link, and sometimes that link can be higher up in the chain. Because daily operations will limit the use of LOTO procedures to authorized workers, training might be the only opportunity affected workers will get to become familiar with the protocols being used for their benefit.

Safety meetings can be significantly improved by having more employees be knowledgeable about the safety expectations of their peers and their superiors. More people can have something to say about the way procedures are being used and feel more involved and invested in these meetings. Training in this way creates safety nets for human error.

- **Make the Process Less Daunting:** Anything can seem complicated if you have no experience with it. What training does is demystify the procedures. It allows for questions to be asked and mistakes to be made when they will not be harmful or lead to a tremendous disaster.

LOTO inspections should take place once a year, and when training has not taken place effectively, everyone can be rather hesitant or stressed out about the processes.

- **Safety Plan Refinement:** Training with safety gets everyone thinking about safety. While training with LOTO procedures you might find that you are unwittingly violating an OSHA requirement. Going around to simulate a practice LOTO inspection can double as a general practice safety inspection. Practice serves as a great reminder of what is expected in terms of safety.

FINAL WORD

A lockout is insurance against being struck by moving equipment while you are doing repairs or adjustments. Use it every time – even for quick jobs.