Lockout/Tagout/Tryout: Your Key to Safety

Safety Talk

John was a member of the maintenance department. He was called to repair a machine in Unit 3. John simply turned the machine off, got his tools, removed the necessary guards, and started to work. The job was on the rear side of the machinery, away from the control panel. John was doing an outstanding job of repairing the machine, but he forgot the most important component of this job: Lockout-Tagout-Tryout.

Meanwhile, Bill the operator returned from his break. He did not see John and there was no indication the machine was under repair. Assuming his machine was ready to run, Bill started it. He had no idea that John was inside!

In an instant John was seriously injured and his screams have been forever etched into Bill’s mind. Could this accident have been prevented? The answer is “Yes!” Here’s how:

Lockout-Tagout-Tryout is a three-part procedure designed to protect you from accidental or unexpected start-up of equipment.

This procedure serves four important purposes:

1. To protect the person working on the equipment.
2. To protect other workers in the area.
3. To protect the equipment.
4. To serve as a communication device for the above three. This is usually done in conjunction with a safe work permit.

The “Lockout” involves the use of a specific lock or locks to isolate equipment from all energy sources. These sources may include air, water, electricity or hydraulic power. Once the shut-off devices have been identified, personal locks are attached to each device.

The “Tagout” requires a specific lockout tag to be completed and attached with each lock that is placed on an isolation device. The completed tag will usually have your lock number, name, department, equipment identification, and reason why the equipment is down.

The “Tryout” requires that you physically attempt to turn on all power switches and devices once the equipment has been locked out. This is your final check and assurance that the equipment has been isolated from all power sources. Once the equipment has been isolated and locked out by following the proper steps, no one should be able to start the equipment. They would not be able to do so until you have completed the necessary work and removed your personal locks from each power switch or device.

Lockout-Tagout-Tryout is a simple procedure that is designed to prevent an accident such as John’s. It’s the key to your safety when working on equipment.

Lockout-Tagout-Tryout requirements will always vary from one facility to the next. If you are unsure about any specific requirements, you should always ask for more information.