CrewSigned

Lockout/Tagout Toolbox Talk

5-minute read-aloud · Last reviewed November 24, 2026

Lockout/tagout is how we make sure a machine cannot start, move or release energy while someone is working on it. When it is skipped, people lose fingers, hands and arms, and some are killed. Most of those injuries happen during maintenance, cleaning or clearing a jam, often on a task the person had done many times before.

Energy is not just electricity. Machines can also hold energy in hydraulic and air lines, springs, raised parts that can fall, flywheels that are still spinning, steam, heat and chemicals in pipes. Shutting off the switch does not take care of all of that. Lockout means controlling every source.

Here are the basic steps. First, know the equipment and every type of energy it uses. Second, tell the people who use or work near the machine that it is being shut down. Third, shut it down the normal way. Fourth, isolate it by opening the disconnects, closing the valves and blocking the parts that could move. Fifth, put your own lock and tag on each isolation point. Sixth, release or hold back stored energy: bleed the lines, block or lower raised parts, and let things stop spinning. Seventh, and this is the step people skip, verify. Try to start the machine, check with a meter, and make sure the controls are returned to off afterward.

Every person working on the equipment puts on their own lock. Your lock, your key. Never let someone else lock out for you, and never work under someone else's lock. If there are several people, use a lockout hasp so everybody's lock is on.

A tag alone is only a warning. It does not stop anyone from turning a switch. Use tags with locks, and only rely on a tag by itself when there is truly no way to lock the device and the written procedure says how.

When the work is done, check that tools are cleared, guards are back on and everyone is clear. Then tell people before the locks come off and the machine is started.

Never remove someone else's lock. If a lock is left on and the person is gone, there is a procedure for that, and it goes through me.

Discussion questions

1. Name every energy source on the piece of equipment you work on most. Did you think of stored energy?
2. Who is authorized to lock out equipment here, and where are the locks and tags kept?
3. What would you do if you found someone else's lock on equipment you needed to start?

OSHA standard

29 CFR 1910.147, The control of hazardous energy (lockout/tagout)
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.147

SOURCES

Lockout/Tagout Fact Sheet (OSHA FS-3529): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHAFS3529.pdf
Control of Hazardous Energy: Lockout/Tagout (OSHA 3120): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3120.pdf
OSHA Safety and Health Topics, Control of Hazardous Energy: https://www.osha.gov/control-hazardous-energy

This talk does not replace training that an OSHA standard requires. Scripts are based on OSHA and NIOSH publications and rewritten in plain language.

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

TOPIC
Lockout/Tagout Toolbox Talk

COMPANY

JOB / SITE

DATE

TIME

PRESENTER

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