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Lockout Tagout

Purpose of Locks and Tags

In addition to ensuring that a machine has been isolated or disconnected from its power source, lock and tag procedures establish safe boundaries to protect workers. Locks and tags serve different purposes, however, and should be used accordingly.

By themselves, tags cannot sufficiently prevent an individual from starting a piece of equipment while another individual is servicing it. Because of this, tags should only act as temporary warnings until the hazardous equipment can be properly locked.

Tags must be securely attached, legible and understandable. They must be made of materials that can withstand the environmental conditions they may encounter, such as rain or snow, and they must bear the name of the authorized person placing the tag on the equipment. If possible, tags should be fastened to the same point as the lock. If not possible, the tag must be near the lock and immediately obvious.

Locks serve as barriers to keep equipment from starting up and injuring someone who may be working on that piece of machinery. They must hold the energy isolating devices in a "safe" or "off" position. Locks used for isolating energy sources are required to be dedicated, marked, and not used for any other purpose. Locks should be inspected to ensure they are standardized and durable.

Each lock must be keyed differently so no more than one person's key will open it. Locks and tags must never be ignored or removed by anyone other than the individual who placed them.

When it is not possible to lock a de-energized energy source, only a tag may be used, but only if there is another way to ensure that no one can accidentally energize the system. The identity of the person who placed the tag must be described on the tag. This usually includes the person's name and contact information, such as a phone number.

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Tags associated with lockout/tagout activities are red, to communicate 'danger'. They may have different warnings printed on them, such as 'Do Not Operate', 'Do Not Start', 'Do Not Open', 'Do Not Close', or 'Do Not Energize'. Both locks and tags must be constructed to withstand the environment in which they are used.

Worker Responsibility Regarding Locks and Tags

Always be aware of and follow lockout/tagout procedures.

- Never attempt to remove a lock or tag or operate a piece of equipment that is locked or tagged.
- Never attempt to restart, or restore energy to, a machine, circuit, or any equipment that is locked or tagged.
- Never attempt to bypass equipment that is locked or tagged.

Affected workers may, as part of their normal procedures, unjam or cleaning a machine with the proper safeguards in place. But when an activity requires bypassing a machine guard, reaching into a machine, or placing part of their body near a point of operation, an authorized worker must first lock out the machine and then perform that task. Remember: when a machine is not locked out, there is always the risk of an accidental startup.

Source:

<https://hsi.com/course-library/safety-compliance/osha/lockout-tagout>