

Lockout/tagout awareness

Key takeaways:

- Only **authorized employees may lock out** equipment for repair or maintenance.
- **Affected employees must be notified** when equipment in their area is being locked out.
- Attempting to remove or use lockout devices **may cause a serious injury or fatality**.
- **No one** except an authorized employee should remove the locks and attempt to use the equipment.

The unexpected startup of a machine or equipment during maintenance can cause serious injury or death to the operator or others in the area. The employee(s) performing maintenance must identify and turn off all sources of energy to prevent the equipment from moving. Those employees are **authorized lockout/tagout (LOTO) users**. Only authorized LOTO users may:

- Apply locks
- Remove locks
- Attempt to power on the equipment

Before starting maintenance, authorized users must isolate every source of energy, including electrical, pneumatic, gravitational, mechanical, and chemical. Employees who work in a location where equipment may be locked out are considered affected employees. Authorized employees must notify affected employees before equipment is locked out.

Tags used on locks must include information about the work and risks, as well as the names of authorized employees.

Any attempt to remove a lockout/tagout device could result in the death of a co-worker. Never attempt to remove or use equipment with lockout devices unless you are an authorized user. Some companies' policies indicate that removal of LOTO devices is a terminable offense—what does your policy state?

Take action (Complete one or more activities as a team)

- GROUP DISCUSSION:** Identify who at your organization is an authorized employee. This employee must be formally trained to identify all energy sources on equipment. What are procedures to notify them of needed equipment repairs? How is the equipment in need of repair labeled?
- FIELD TRIP:** Is there a machine being repaired in your area? What do the locks/tags look like? Is the machine clearly marked as dangerous and locked out? If not, immediately report to management.
- EQUIPMENT REVIEW:** Take a look at a machine near you. What are some types of energy that it uses? Electrical, gravitational, mechanical, or pneumatic? Who's the authorized employee who can repair it?



