



You "Locked" it...And You "Tagged" It, Now What?

All machinery or equipment capable of movement must be de-energized or disengaged and blocked or locked out during cleaning, servicing, adjusting or setting up operations, whenever required.

So far, so good. We've defined when a Lock-Out/Tag-Out program must be instituted, but we haven't designed how we're going to do it. Do we go to the store and buy a lock, and maybe buy some tags, but then what do we do?

Let's get down to the facts. We have to control energy on the jobsite, but we have to do it in a fashion that is relatively foolproof. We're going to de-energize a power line, a gas line, a hydraulic line, etc., but we have to do certain things to insure that that energy is positively placed out of service until the worker completes his cleaning, or servicing, or adjusting, or setting up operations.

A formal, written Lock-Out/Tag-Out Program will get the job done safely, if it is done right. What are some of the procedures that we have to put in place to that we can implement our program?

In the Introductory portion of this Safety Talk, we stated:

All machinery or equipment capable of movement must be de-energized or disengaged and blocked or locked out during such activities as cleaning, servicing, adjusting, setting up operations, or in some other fashion protect workers from energy that can kill them in a heartbeat.

The locking-out of the control circuits in lieu of blocking out main power disconnects is prohibited. All equipment control valve handles must be provided with a means for locking out. The lock-out procedure requires that stored energy (i.e., mechanical, hydraulic, air, etc.) be released or blocked before equipment is locked out for repairs.

Appropriate employees are then provided with individually keyed personal safety locks. Employees must check the safety of the lock-out by attempting a start-up after making sure no one is exposed. Where the power disconnecter does not also disconnect the electrical control circuit, the appropriate electrical enclosure must be identified.

The only way a Lock-Out/Tag-Out program can be completely safe is for the person who puts the lock on the power panel has the only key to this lock in his pocket. There should never be a second key, never, never, never!

But what if the electrician goes home and forgets to unlock the locked lock? So What? It's his life, not yours.

Remember, one key to one lock. Not two, not three, just one.

And, the system also includes Tagging out. Remember, Lock-out/Tag-out. They go together, like peas in a pod. The tag tells everyone else on the jobsite the Who, What, When, Where, and Why the power was locked out:

Who locked out the power/energy

What the lock-out is for

When the lock was applied (time of day)

Where the electrician is located (jobsite location) with the key

Why the lock was applied

With all of these factors in place, we have a true, workable and safe Lock-Out/Tag-Out system.

Can there be more than one lock on a power circuit? Sure, because there may be more than one worker working on different portions of the circuitry (repairs being made at separate locations). Of course, to remind you once again, one key to one lock.

Here are some more reminders of how to set up, implement, and carry out a safe Lock-Out/Tag-Out Program:

- One key, one lock
- Always apply a lock and a tag
- Put Who/What/When/Where/Why on the Tag
- Lock-out energy such as steam/electricity/ water/gas/stream/etc.
- Don't play Russian Roulette (use the key)
- Have a written control program
- Keep extra locks on each jobsite (one key to each lock)
- Maintain a safe attitude
- Drain Residual Energy (Hydraulic Pressure/Hydrostatic Pressure/Etc.)

Finally, remember the four key elements of a Lock-out/Tag-out program:

- (1) De-energize the equipment
- (2) Lock-out all disconnect switches.
- (3) Tag all disconnect switches (who/what/when/where/why)
- (4) Test the equipment to insure it is de-energized before working on it.

No safety program on a construction jobsite will be effective without training, more training, and retraining. Practice makes perfect, Mother always said.