Eliminate Doubt ? Lock It Out!



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Always follow your company’s lockout and tagout procedures. Just shutting off the power is not enough. You must isolate all forms of energy for the machinery or equipment. Energy can come from many different sources. It can be electrical, mechanical, hydraulic or pneumatic. It can even be stored energy such as a spring under tension.

These steps may be part of your company’s lockout procedures:

- Prepare for the shutdown by identifying the potential hazards and the type of energy used by the machine. Locate all of the switches, valves and other devices which need to be isolated.
- Tell affected employees about the lockout, and why you have to do it.
- You must wear the appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) required for the task. Ask your supervisor if you are not sure.
- Turn off the equipment or machinery following the proper procedures.
- “Tag” these turn-off points, especially if they cannot be monitored from where the work is being done.
- Isolate all energy sources, including any secondary power supplies. “Tag” these isolation points, particularly if they cannot be monitored from the worksite.
- Apply approved lockout and tagout devices. Fill out the tags completely and correctly. Each person working on the repairs should apply his own lock.
- Remove stored energy. This may include releasing the tension on springs, blocking or blanking pipe lines, releasing hydraulic and pneumatic systems, bleeding lines and opening valves.
- Verify the isolation of the equipment after making sure all personnel are clear of the danger area. Ensure the main energy disconnect cannot be moved to the “on” position. Then operate all controls on the equipment to make sure the equipment cannot start.
- Place all controls, switches and valves back in the “off” position.

Now that the equipment is locked out, you can begin to do your authorized repairs, adjustments or cleaning. When you have completed your work, you will need to remove the lockout and tagout by following certain procedures. If more than one person has installed a lock and tag on the machinery, the last person

working will likely be responsible for ensuring the correct startup procedures are followed. This may include the following:

- Make sure all employees are safely clear of the equipment.
- Remove your tools.
- Replace machine guards.
- Remove your lockout device.
- Never remove another person’s lock.

A lockout and tagout should be used whenever an unexpected start-up or release of stored energy could injure you or your co-workers. Don’t leave anything to chance. Follow your company’s procedures, and lock it out for safety.