



## LOCKOUT / TAGOUT

### Competency

Did you know that failure to control hazardous energy accounts for nearly 10 percent of the serious accidents in many industries? These failures often result in fatal and life changing events for employees. Examples of lockout/tagout procedure failures may result in:

- Shock or electrocution from live parts
- Scalding from steam or hot liquids
- Chemical burns or poisoning
- From machinery:
  - Deep cuts and gashes
  - Crushing injuries
  - Amputations

The use of proper lockout/tagout (LOTO) practices, procedures and training safeguard workers from hazardous energy releases that can result in fatal and life changing (FL&C) injuries in the workplace.

OSHA requires that employees are trained to ensure that they know, understand, and follow the applicable provisions of the hazardous energy control procedures. The training must cover at least three areas: aspects of the employer's energy control program; elements of the energy control procedure relevant to the employee's duties or assignment; and the various requirements of the OSHA standards related to lockout/tagout.

While many employers provide some level of "LOTO training" for their employees, many fatal and life changing accidents/injuries occur to "trained" LOTO employees. This is proof that some company training may not be enough to educate and protect employees. Many of these accidents/injuries could have been prevented by implementing the following:

- Develop equipment-specific LOTO procedures/controls. Avoid "boilerplate" programs/procedures that don't address your specific exposures.
- Create specific and thorough LOTO training for "Authorized", "Affected" and "Other" employees.
- Require "trained/competent employees" to demonstrate that they understand their role as an Authorized, Affected or Other employee.
- Post LOTO procedures (in English, Spanish etc.) on each piece of equipment with potential exposure.
- Conduct periodic inspections over the course of a year and during real applications of lockout instead of during the "once per year training for all" approach.

A key sign of an effective training program is that it happens frequently throughout the year in small doses to update workers on new information, correcting negative trends, addressing incidents, and keeping best practices on workers' minds.

A competency-based approach is a good way to conduct your lockout/tagout training, as well as training for lift truck and crane operators and any other high-risk job. Provide employees with thorough and equipment specific LOTO training in the classroom and provide them with the opportunity to execute LOTO procedures in a "staged/safe" environment as well as through the year in supervised real-time situations. The more frequently employees have a chance to implement these LOTO procedures the more likely they will be executed appropriately.

It may seem like a lot of work just to perform some routine troubleshooting or to clear a jam that only takes a few minutes, but fatal and life changing injuries can and will happen very quickly and once they do, time cannot be reversed.