



6 Most Common Lockout/Tagout Mistakes



Lockout/Tagout (LO/TO) accidents are not only needless, but serious. They result not in small cuts or scratches, but often cause amputations, serious fractures, or death. Any energy source—electrical, mechanical, pneumatic, hydraulic, or gas—can be deadly if not controlled. No lockout system will be effective if it is undertaken in a hit-or-miss fashion. You must be absolutely sure that your workers are absolutely sure about lockout/Tagout procedures, whether they're performing the lockout, whether they're affected by it, or whether they're just working in the area.

[Make No Mistake](#) | Here are six common lockout/Tagout mistakes employees make. Could any of your workers be making any of these?

Mistake 1: "This job will only take a few minutes. I don't need to use a lock—I'll just shut down the equipment controls." No! Never under any circumstance is this permissible!

Mistake 2: A worker pulls the switch and correctly locks it out. Then another workers places his lock through the first worker's lock. The first guy finishes first removes his lock, leaving the other guy's lock lying on the ground near the switch. Wrong! Now the second worker has no protection. Make sure that multiple lockout procedures are always followed when more than one person is servicing the equipment.

Mistake 3: A worker performing a lockout is afraid she's going to lose the key, so she leaves it in the lock. Big mistake! Now anyone could come along and remove the lock not realizing it's protecting someone's life.

Mistake 4: "Joe, could you take my lock, shut off the machinery, and lock it out while I get my tools together?" Stop! Don't let employees depend on the other guy! Each worker must perform the shutoff and lockout him or herself.

Mistake 5: An employee locked out the control circuit and thought that was good enough. Wrong! The main disconnect or switch must be locked out too. Even one drop of water or a few particles of dust can cause a machine to operate without anyone pressing any start buttons.

Mistake 6: Everything is correctly locked out and a machine repairperson is ready to go to work. He's only got an hour to finish the job, so he jumps right in. Stop! Before he does any repairs, he must take a few moments to test the controls to make sure they are definitely inoperative.

Make sure any worker performing lockout/Tagout in your facility is properly trained, evaluated, and following your written lockout procedures. You simply can't afford mistakes with lockout/Tagout.

To Review the County LO/TO Policy/Program, please contact EMA for a Copy.

