

Safety Talk

Hazardous Energy

Energy is the power for doing any type of work and it comes in many forms, from many different sources. There's energy resulting from moving objects like releasing a suspended load or an uncoiling spring, combustion of materials, energy transfer as well as electrical energy. Many of them create hazards in your workplace. The hazards arise when energy of any type builds to a dangerous level or is released at a time or in a quantity that could injure a worker.

Electrical energy seems to provide the most headaches and potential hazards, possibly because it's found at virtually every type of workplace. The best way to control the hazards is to prevent it from being transmitted from its source to the equipment that it powers. This can be accomplished by doing the following:

- Identifying the energy sources. When equipment in your workplace needs service or maintenance, it's important to determine what powers the equipment and to know what, if any, energy will remain when the energy source is disconnected.
- De-energize the equipment. This is done by isolating the equipment from its energy source and making certain that no energy can flow to the equipment. This may include disconnecting a motor from the equipment, isolating electrical circuits, disconnecting equipment from energy sources.
- Dissipate any stored energy that can't be isolated.
- Lock out or tag out energy isolating devices. Energy isolating devices prevent energy from being transmitted from an energy source to equipment and are the main means of protection for those that service equipment. Examples include manually operated electrical circuit breakers, main disconnect switches and line blocks.

Locking out secures an energy-isolating device in an off, closed or neutral position so that work can be done safely on hazardous equipment. Tagging out places a warning tag or sign on an energy-isolating device. They must control hazardous energy at least as effectively as lockout devices.

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However, they serve as a warning as compared to a lockout device which is a physical barrier. These devices must meet the following requirements to be sure that they are effective at protecting workers:

- They must be durable and work under the weather or environmental conditions in which they're used. They must be legible in wet, damp or corrosive conditions.
- Devices must be standardized in color, shape or size. They must have a standardized print and warning format. This makes it easier for all to recognize and understand the device's meaning.
- These devices must be strong enough that they can't be accidentally removed. They do no good if they fall off or are knocked off by someone walking past.
- Identifiable- any employee that sees a lockout or tagout device must be able to recognize who attached it and understand why it's there. Only the employee that attached the device should remove it and only when work is completed on the equipment.

By being aware of the potential for hazardous energy at the workplace and knowing ways to release it, employees can be much safer at the workplace.

Discussion Questions

What is a main difference between a lockout and a tagout device?

What are some possible sources of hazardous energy?

MEETING / TRAINING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

COMPANY: _____

_____ SAFETY MEETING

JOB/DEPT: _____

_____ SAFETY TRAINING

DATE: ___/___/___

TIME: _____

TOPICS ADDRESSED: _____

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURES

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: _____

ACTION TAKEN: _____

Supervisor's Signature

____/____/____
Date

Safety Coordinator's Signature

____/____/____
Date