

Facility Safety

# What is Lockout Tagout?

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## The WHAT

**What is LOTO?** "Lockout/tagout" refers to specific practices and procedures to safeguard employees from the unexpected energization or startup of machinery and equipment, or the release of hazardous energy during service or maintenance activities. This requires, in part, that a designated individual turns off and disconnects the machinery or equipment from its energy source(s) before performing service or maintenance and that the authorized employee(s) either lock or tag the energy-isolating device(s) to prevent the release of hazardous energy and take steps to verify that the energy has been isolated effectively.

## The WHY

Why do I need to be concerned about LOTO? Employees can be seriously or fatally injured if machinery they service or maintain unexpectedly energizes, starts up, or releases stored energy. OSHA's standard on the Control of Hazardous Energy (Lockout/Tagout), found in ***Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1910.147***, spells out the steps employers must take to prevent accidents associated with hazardous energy. Practicing LOTO not only provides workers with protection from industrial machinery, but also protects your company from extensive OSHA fines that be detrimental to company reputation and finances.

## The HOW?

How does LOTO work? Lockout devices hold energy-isolation devices in a safe or "off" position. They provide protection by preventing machines or equipment from becoming energized because they are positive restraints that no one can remove without a key or other unlocking mechanism. Tagout devices, by contrast, are prominent warning devices that an authorized employee fastens to energy-isolating devices to warn employees not to reenergize the machine while he or she services or maintains it. Tagout devices are easier to remove and, by themselves, provide employees with less protection than do lockout devices.

*Previously featured on National Marker Company.*

*For more information on Lockout Tagout equipment provided by National Marker, please visit [MSCDirect.com](http://MSCDirect.com).*