

## LOCKOUT TAGOUT

It has come to our attention that the **Lockout-Tagout (LOTO)** regulations and the definitions can lead to some confusion within organizations as to who can and cannot perform aspects of LOTO and who should be trained to what level. LOTO is a basic rule; however it has several important aspects to protect workers which can sometimes be misinterpreted.

**LOTO** is a safety procedure which is used in industry to ensure that dangerous machines are properly shut off and controlled while the equipment is being maintained or serviced. It requires that hazardous power sources be "isolated and rendered inoperative" before any repair procedure is started. LOTO works in conjunction with a lock, usually locking the device or the power source with the hasp (a device for fastening) and placing it in such a position that no hazardous power sources can be turned on. The procedure requires that a notification tag be affixed to the locked showing the name of the person performing the work and a contact phone number.

**In** the United States, a lock selected by color, shape or size (e.g. red padlock) is used to designate a standard safety device, locking and securing hazardous energy. Locks and keys should be unique per individual. An employee's lock and tag cannot be removed by anyone other than the individual who installed the lock and tag, unless removal is accomplished under the direction of the employer. Employer procedures and training for such removal must be developed, documented, and incorporated into the employer's energy control program.

**For** general industry, OSHA's standard on the Control of Hazardous Energy (LOTO), found in CFR 1910.147, details the steps employers must take to prevent accidents associated with hazardous energy. The standard addresses practices and procedures necessary to disable machinery and prevent the release of potentially hazardous energy while maintenance or servicing activities are performed.

*There are two key definitions for employees working within LOTO:*

An **Affected employee** is a person whose job requires him/her to operate or use a machine or equipment on which servicing or maintenance is being performed under lockout or tagout, or whose job requires him/her to work in an area in which such servicing or maintenance is being performed.

An **Authorized employee** is a person who locks out or tags out machines or equipment in order to perform servicing or maintenance on that machine or equipment. An affected employee becomes an authorized employee when that employee's duties include performing servicing or maintenance covered under this section.

Even though there may be costs associated with implementation, as well as training time, the benefits far outweigh the potential liabilities. Through proper and effective training, employers can increase employee awareness, minimize the number of and severity of injuries, reduce costs for insurance and litigation, and minimize potential OSHA non-compliance-related financial penalties. For more detailed information please refer to OSHA Standard 1910.147.