



DOAS Loss Control Bulletin

February 2015

Topic of the Month...Hazardous Energy Control (Lockout/Tagout)

For most of us, we just need to unplug the equipment before we work on it; but some equipment requires extra effort to control the hazards. Working on wiring and equipment while energized is life threatening and should only be done in extreme cases.

What is hazardous energy? Energy sources including electrical, mechanical, hydraulic, pneumatic, chemical, thermal or other sources in machines and equipment can be hazardous to workers. During the servicing and maintenance of machines and equipment, the unexpected startup or release of stored energy could cause injury to employees.

What are the harmful effects of hazardous energy? Workers servicing or maintaining machines or equipment may be seriously injured or killed if hazardous energy is not properly controlled. Injuries resulting from the failure to control hazardous energy during maintenance activities can be serious or fatal! Injuries may include electrocution, burns, crushing, cutting, lacerating, amputating, or fracturing body parts, and others. Craft workers, electricians, machine operators, and laborers are among the 3 million workers who service equipment routinely and face the greatest risk of injury. Workers injured on the job from exposure to hazardous energy lose an average of 24 workdays for recuperation.

What can be done to control hazardous energy? Failure to control hazardous energy accounts for nearly 10 percent of the serious accidents in many industries. Proper Lockout/Tagout (LOTO) practices and procedures safeguard workers from the release of hazardous energy. A LOTO program establishes a system to protect workers from hazardous energy. Each worker must be trained to know, understand and be able to follow the applicable provisions of the hazardous energy control procedures:

- Proper lockout/tagout (LOTO) practices and procedures safeguard workers from the release of hazardous energy. Machine specific actions and procedures for addressing and controlling hazardous energy during servicing and maintenance of machines and equipment must be established. Employees need to be trained in the purpose and function of the energy control program and have the knowledge and skills required for the safe application, usage and removal of the energy control devices.
- All employees who are authorized to lockout machines or equipment and perform the service and maintenance operations need to be trained in recognition of applicable hazardous energy sources in the workplace, the type and magnitude of energy found in the workplace, and the means and methods of isolating and/or controlling the energy.
- Retraining of all employees to maintain proficiency or introduce new or changed control methods.

This is a straight forward method to protect yourself and your fellow workers. Use it!

Thanks for your time. Let's work together to make Georgia a safer place to work.

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