

Safety Alert



Lockout/Tagout Exemption

According to OSHA, serious injuries and death have occurred and continue to occur from inadequate hazardous energy control during servicing and maintenance activities, despite the fact that the standard (29 CFR 1910.147) has been in effect for more than 20 years.

Certain single-energy-source equipment can be exempted from the written procedures requirement but only if eight specific conditions are met. Written procedures are not required for a particular machine or equipment, when all of the following criteria exist:

1. There is no potential for stored or residual energy or re-accumulation of stored energy after shut down;
2. there is only a single energy source which can be readily identified and isolated;
3. the isolation and locking out of that energy source will completely de-energize and deactivate the machine or equipment;
4. the energy source is isolated and locked out during servicing or maintenance;
5. a single lockout device will achieve a locked-out condition;
6. the lockout device is under the exclusive control of the employee performing the servicing or maintenance;
7. the servicing or maintenance does not create hazards for other employees; and
8. the employer, in utilizing this exception, has had no accidents involving the unexpected activation or re-energization of the machine or equipment during servicing or maintenance.

Unless all 8 criteria are met, it needs a written lockout/tagout procedure. In general, the majority of all equipment/machinery in a facility will need a procedure (keep in mind air handlers, exhaust fans, boilers, generators, etc.).

OSHA has stepped up its enforcement efforts, and are actively citing employers for not having written lockout/tagout procedures. OSHA citations can carry monetary penalties up to \$70,000 per occurrence for each missing procedure.

ACS recommends lockout/tagout procedures be posted on/near every piece of equipment. In addition, management need to ensure (and enforce) insist that employees follow these procedures.

