

Lockout/Tagout

“Lockout/Tagout” is a program to address the "control of energy" to machinery or equipment that could suddenly release stored energy and cause serious injuries or fatalities to workers. For example, a lockout/tagout program for the control of gravity would involve implementing a policy and then training workers to use blocks or stands to prevent machinery or equipment from falling onto a worker while the worker is working on the machinery.

Lockout/tagout can be used to avoid worker injury from the accidental start-up of machinery or equipment undergoing repair or maintenance. In these cases, the first step involves the identification of potential hazards with machinery, equipment, or components parts (motors, etc.). When working on electrical equipment, machinery should be “tagged out” at the power source, and the tag should identify the person who may authorize re-energizing the panel.

Training, education, and supervision of workers is essential to ensure proper safety protocols are being followed.

Examples of where lockout/tagout could have saved lives:

- A potato-digger was being operated behind a tractor with a crew riding the digger on the work-stations provided. The tractor and digger stopped briefly to perform maintenance of clearing vines from the internal parts of the digger. While the employees entered the internal components of the machine, there was no provision for controlling the tractor energy to the digger. When one of the two employees who entered the digger exited, the tractor driver, assuming the maintenance was finished, activated the PTO, killing the employee still inside the digger.
- A worker came in from the field for repairs on a “flail-type” brush mower being operated behind an orchard tractor. The worker entered the company shop and raised the “mower” with a portable jack. The worker climbed under the mower to perform welding repairs when the mower slipped off the jack, impacted the worker, and killed him instantly.

You can help avoid lockout/tagout injuries by requesting workplace reviews by DOSH or Farm Bureau Retro/Safety staff.