

What is Lock-Out Tag-Out?

Lock-out/tag-out is defined in the Canadian Standards Act as the “placement of a lock or tag on an energy-isolating device in accordance with an established procedure, indicating that the energy-isolating device is not to be operated until removal of the lock or tag in accordance with an established procedure”.

In practice, lock-out is the isolation of energy from the system (machine or equipment), which physically locks the system in a safe mode. The energy-isolating device can be a manually operated disconnect switch, a circuit breaker, a line valve or a block (note: push buttons, selection switches and other circuit control switches are NOT considered). In most cases, these devices will have loops or tabs which can be locked to a stationary item in a safe, de-energized position. The lock-out device can be any device that has the ability to secure the energy-isolating device in a safe position.

Tagging Out

Tag-out is a labelling process that is always used when lock-out is required. The process involves attaching or using an indicator that includes items such as:

1. Why lock-out was required.
2. Time of application of tag-out.
3. Name of authorized person who attached the tag and lock on the system. Note: Only the person who placed the lock and tag is permitted to remove them.



The Importance of Lock-Out Tag-Out

It is necessary to remove standard safety devices like rails or guarding devices to repair, maintain or remove jams from a machine. Procedures like lock-out/tag-out will provide alternative methods to do the work safely without accidental release of energy or operation of machinery, thus preventing injury or death.

What Lock-Out Procedures Should Contain

The written lock-out procedure will identify what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, what tools are available to do it, who is supposed to do it, and who needs to be notified. The document should specify:

- The specific machine and isolation process.
- How and where lock-out devices are installed.
- How stored energy is controlled and subsequently de-energized.
- How the isolation can be verified.

Basic Steps of Locking and Tagging Out a System

1. Prepare for shutdown (an authorized person identifies which sources of energy are present and must be controlled).
2. Notify all affected employees (who, what, why, etc.).
3. Equipment shutdown in normal manner.
4. Isolation of system from hazardous energy (Lock-out procedure).
5. Dissipation of residual or stored energy.
6. Lock-out/tag-out. Each device or lock should only have one key to prevent accidental removal or tampering (There should be as many locks as people working on the system).
7. Verify isolation.
8. Perform maintenance or service activity.
9. Remove lock-out/tag-out devices.