



Lockout/Tagout training critical for engineering personnel

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Because of the prevalent heat and associated humidity, during the Summer season most hotels draw more electrical energy to power air conditioning, refrigeration, and large mechanical units. Such greater use may necessitate more frequent inspections, maintenance and repairs by engineering personnel to keep this equipment operating at peak efficiency. Therefore, now is the time to remind engineering staff members about the importance of adhering to Lockout/Tagout procedures before commencing service on electrical-based mechanical equipment.

Lockout/Tagout refers to the complete isolation of equipment from circuits during maintenance or service work. OSHA regulations 29 CFR 1910.147 and 1926.417 require the use of locks or tags as warning devices to ensure personnel are not injured from accidental machine start-ups. Examples of such machinery or equipment include but are not limited to high voltage power supplies, boilers, elevators, HVAC systems, pumping units, and laundry equipment. Unexpected energizations or start-ups can result in potential electrocution of employees, damage to mechanical equipment, uneven distribution of energy, and possible damage to back-up or emergency generators.

Pictured below: Emplacing a locking device on an energy-isolation source ensures that equipment being controlled cannot be operated until the lockout device is removed.



An effective Lockout/Tagout management plan for a hotel's engineering department should incorporate many aspects. A written Logout/Tagout (LOTO) policy should be put in place and adopted as standard operating procedure. All engineering employees must be trained about the purpose, scope and nature of the LOTO policy so that they will understand the purpose and function of the LOTO program and procedures. Employees should also be trained so that they understand the purpose, contents and requirements of OSHA regulation 29 CFR 1910.147, The Control of Hazardous Energy (Lockout/Tagout).

Training on LOTO procedures should be conducted on an annual basis. Retraining is required whenever there is a change in job assignment, machines, equipment or processes that present a new hazard or a change in the energy control procedures. It is the responsibility of the hotel's Director of Engineering to maintain and update training records that document certifications, specialized training, and job-safety instruction for all engineering employees.

Finally, the Director of Engineering should assure compliance with the LOTO program through the use of periodic inspections which review the entire process. The inspection shall provide for a demonstration of the procedures by all authorized employees. The inspection may also include periodic random audits and visual observation of a lockout/tagout by authorized personnel during the performance of normal assigned duties.

Deficiencies noted during the audit should signal a need for retraining of personnel and tighter supervision by management to correct these deficiencies. ✧

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