

Lockout/tagout (LOTO)

Lockout/tagout (LOTO) is a critical safety system that protects workers from injury during equipment maintenance. It's all about making sure machines stay off — and can't unexpectedly start up — while being serviced.

What's the difference?

- **Lockout:** Placing a device on equipment to block energy from reaching it
- **Tagout:** Adding a tag to the lockout device to warn others not to turn the machine back on

You must use LOTO on any equipment that could cause injury if it suddenly powers up during servicing. Skipping this step can lead to serious accidents.

LOTO applies to many types of energy sources, including:

- Electrical
- Hydraulic
- Pneumatic
- Mechanical
- Thermal
- Process piping



The 6 steps of lockout/tagout

1. **Prepare:** Know how the energy will be controlled and let your team know what's being locked out
2. **Shut down:** Use the machine's regular shutdown procedure
3. **Isolate the energy:** Find and turn off all the power sources
4. **Apply lockout/tagout:** Switch each energy-isolating device to the "off" position and tag it with a warning label
5. **Release stored energy:** Safely drain, block, or release any leftover energy in the system
6. **Verify:** Try to start the machine to confirm it's truly off and won't restart

LOTO isn't just a process — it's protection. Always follow these steps to keep yourself and your team safe.