Lockout/Tagout

According to OSHA (29 CFR 1910.147), approximately 3 million workers service equipment and if lockout/tagout (LOTO) is not properly implemented they face the risk of injury.

LOTO refers to specific practices and procedures to safeguard employees from the unexpected energization or startup of machinery and equipment as well as the release of hazardous energy during service or maintenance activities.

The lockout standard applies when:
1. Employee must remove or bypass a guard or other safety device during service and maintenance of equipment.
2. A danger zone exists during a machine’s operating cycle.
3. Employee is required to place any body part into an area of the machinery or equipment where work is performed.

There are several sources of energy, such as electrical, mechanical, chemical, pneumatic, thermal, hydraulic, and gravitational that can be identified as a potentially hazardous energy source and that have the potential to unexpectedly startup, energize, or release energy. All potential sources must be identified and locked, blocked, or released before any type of servicing or maintenance is performed. Each company must prepare a written Lockout/Tagout Program to control hazardous energy which includes the scope, purpose, authorization, rules, and techniques to be used in case of emergency. All machinery and equipment with the potential to release dangerous energy must be identified and accept a lockout device when major replacements, repairs, renovations, or modifications are performed and audits must be conducted.

Personnel operating machinery and equipment as well as personnel who may be affected by the LOTO procedures identified in the Lockou/Tagout Program must be trained in the steps required to shut down, isolate, and block machinery and equipment in order to control hazardous energy and able to establish all appropriate LOTO procedures.