

IS YOUR LOCKOUT PROCESS EFFECTIVE?

Different workplaces and energy systems need energy isolation procedures that are customized to them – what works for some other company might not work for you.

Before using a one-size-fits-all solution, explore the different lockout methods.

INDIVIDUAL LOCKOUT

Used when: An employee secures their own personal lock to the energy-isolating device.

If two or more employees are working in an area where energy is being isolated, each one needs to secure their own personal lock. If you're attaching your lock first, you're also responsible for ensuring that the energy source is isolated.

The final lock should not be removed until shift changes or employee reassignments are completed, in order to maintain the control of hazardous energy throughout. Once the final lock is removed, the energy is no longer isolated.

If work on the system extends over two or more shifts, or employees are reassigned before completing it, your supervisor needs to maintain the hazardous energy control procedure.

GROUP LOCKOUT

Used when: There are multiple energy isolating devices and multiple workers involved in the work. When their work on the energy-isolated system is complete, they remove the lock and power the system again.

Group lockouts need to follow a written procedure developed by a supervisor.

Group lockout procedures need to designate a person responsible for placing the energy-isolating devices on the machinery or systems that need to be locked out. Usually, this person is a supervisor.

The designated person needs to place the key to each lock in a lockbox or key ring and apply a personal lock.

That designated person needs to complete, sign, and post a list identifying all machinery or equipment included in the procedure and the steps taken to isolate the energy.

COMPLEX GROUP LOCKOUT

Used when: Individual or group lockout is not a practical option. Group lockout procedures may need to be modified or adapted through written procedures, like a work permit or a master tag system, to create a complex group lockout.

Modification considerations: You might modify a group lockout into a complex group lockout because:

- The physical size of machinery, equipment, pipeline, piping, or process may occupy large areas and buildings, or one large area
- The energy-isolating devices are inaccessible and could expose workers to hazards (e.g., confined spaces or high noise levels)
- The number of workers involved in conducting the work may make group lockout impractical or difficult (e.g., plant shutdowns)
- The number of energy-isolating devices makes group lockout difficult or impractical
- Extended isolation timelines prevent locks from being used for other work
- Interdependent systems may present a complex situation where group lockout is impractical or difficult (e.g., piping, pipelines or computer controls at remote or different physical locations)

REMEMBER

Your energy isolation procedure should take into account each system or procedure that requires non-routine work, including their individual tasks. Only then are you able to determine which energy-isolation method works best for you.