

HVAC: Lockout/tagout (LOTO)

Lockout/tagout is a procedure that is implemented to prevent employees from releasing stored energy or from starting a piece of equipment accidentally. In the field of HVAC this is used when doing maintenance on or servicing equipment. It works by disconnecting the power source and locking or tagging it in the off position while work is performed.

Steps for Performing LOTO

Prior to shutting down equipment:

- Notify co-workers and anyone that will be affected by shutting down the equipment that it is going to occur
- Locate energy sources, procedures to be followed, and any hazards present

Shutting down the equipment:

- Follow procedures in place for the company to lock down the equipment
- Isolate equipment
- Identify all energy sources for the equipment
- Disconnect or isolate the energy for each one
- Release any stored energy
- Lockout or tagout the equipment
- Place a lock or tag on the equipment so that it prohibits the equipment from being switched to an on position and keeps it in a de-energized state
- Test the equipment
- Ensure the equipment is isolated by trying to start the equipment
- Before proceeding, ensure lock or tag is still in the appropriate place with equipment in off position

Removing LOTO Devices:

- Ensure all pieces of equipment or machine are back in their appropriate places
- Work area should be clear and employees should be notified before starting up equipment

Failure to follow specific LOTO procedures could lead to serious injury or death and are an imperative part of staying safe for HVAC workers.