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Lockout / tag-out an absolute necessity

Who establishes your in-house Lock out / Tag out procedure

Both the Ontario Electrical Safety Code (OESC) and the Ministry of Labour under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) require electrical equipment to be de-energized before work is performed on or near bare live parts of the equipment.

The LOCK/TAGOUT procedure that is used to ensure this safety precaution is a responsibility of the employer for the workers at risk. Input for this procedure can be obtained from your maintenance people, the joint Health and Safety Committee and the Risk Management Group.

Following a rigid procedure for LOCK/OUT will help avoid the risk of electrical contact

Items to be included within a LOCK/OUT procedure

Isolate:

- Identify the switch to be used to de-energize the circuit.
- Use safe work practices in operating the switch, e.g. clear work area around the switch, use left hand to operate, stand to the side not in front, look away as you operate a switch.

Verify:

- Either visually examine or conduct testing to ensure that all phases have been de-energized.
- If doing testing, check for voltage line-to-ground first to ensure that the return path is established and that the tester is operating properly.
- Whether doing testing or visual examination to ensure that all phases are open, you must still test for voltage at the point of working, in case of a second source or power, or if the switch was originally wired improperly.

Ensure

- The procedures must establish a means to ensure that the equipment will stay de-energized while workers are at risk.
- Locks must be of substantial construction, to ensure that specialized equipment such as bolt cutters or hacksaws must be used to remove a lock if the key is not available.

OESC rules regarding isolation:

2-304 Disconnect and lock out equipment to be serviced

28-602 Types and ratings of disconnecting means

28-604 Location of disconnecting means

Also check Ministry of Labour latest rules regarding isolation.
