



October 5 — Your Lock Has to Protect You

Going through LOTO sheet with a couple newish EEs. Was explaining the breaker locations and where to write this information down on the sheet. When doing this I noticed our newest EE had his lock through the first EEs lock not the breaker itself.

Explained to him that although no one should be removing his lock his lock is actually doing nothing. I believe this is probably the first time he has locked out on anything other than a box. Showed him where and how to lock out on the actual breaker. He thanked me for taking the time to correct him and teach him the proper way.

A Lock on the Job Doesn't Automatically Mean You're Protected

While going through a LOTO sheet with newer employees, the team was reviewing breaker locations and where that information needed to be recorded. During the walkthrough, an important detail was caught: the newest employee had placed his lock through another employee's lock instead of locking the breaker itself.

The employee had a lock on the job, but his lock was not actually securing the energy isolating device. If the lockout had been left that way, his personal lock would not have provided the protection it was intended to provide.

This was also a good example of why we take the time to teach people who are newer to a task. The observation indicates this may have been the employee's first time locking out something other than a box. Rather than assuming he should already know the process, the issue was identified while the LOTO was being reviewed, and he was shown the proper way to lock out the breaker.

LOTO is not just about putting a lock somewhere on the equipment. You need to understand what your lock is controlling and verify that it is actually securing the energy source. If you're new to a type of lockout, don't guess. Ask someone to walk you through it before you begin.

And if you see someone who may not understand the process, speak up. Taking a few minutes to teach someone the correct method can prevent a serious mistake from becoming an incident.

Hazards

- Lock not securing the actual energy isolating device
- Unexpected equipment energization
- Loss of personal protection
- Incorrect LOTO application
- Assuming a lock is effective without verifying its placement
- New or inexperienced employees performing unfamiliar LOTO tasks

Words of Wisdom

A lock only protects you when it is doing the job it was intended to do. Know what you are locking, know what energy it controls, and never be afraid to ask for help when a lockout is unfamiliar.

Pause and Think

- Is your personal lock actually securing the energy isolating device?
- Do you know exactly what your lock is protecting you from?
- If you're unfamiliar with a type of LOTO, who should you ask for help?
- Are you verifying your lock placement rather than assuming it is correct?
- If you see someone who may not understand the lockout process, are you willing to stop and help?

Closing Thought

Don't assume that having a lock means you are protected. Know where your lock belongs, verify that it is actually securing the energy source, and take the time to learn when the lockout is unfamiliar.

See Something • Say Something • Do Something