SHARP START

August 17 — One Last Look Can Make All the Difference

Electricians were getting ready to change out a motor that involved removing some piping as well. When looking at the pipes ties into it I noticed one valve wasn't locked out.	**Stopped the employees and had them get with customer to fix the lockout**

The most dangerous hazard...

...is often the one we think has already been addressed.

While preparing to replace a motor, electricians reviewed the work area before beginning. Because the job also involved removing connected piping, the isolation points were checked one final time. During that review, it was discovered that one valve supplying the system had not been locked out.

This observation is a reminder that lockout/tagout is more than following a checklist—it's about understanding the entire system. Complex jobs often involve multiple energy sources, and it's easy to focus on the primary equipment while overlooking a secondary connection. Taking the time to stop and verify every isolation point can prevent an unexpected release of energy or product.

One final check made the difference. Before the first bolt was loosened or the first piece of piping was removed, the missing isolation was identified and corrected. That's exactly what we want to see: employees taking ownership of the job, asking questions, and verifying that every source of hazardous energy has been controlled before work begins.

Hazards

- Unexpected release of stored energy
- Pressurized piping
- Incomplete lockout/tagout
- Contact with hazardous materials
- Line of fire hazards
- Equipment damage or injury during maintenance

Words of Wisdom

The best time to find a missing lockout is before the work starts, not after the system is opened.

Pause and Think

- When you perform a lockout, how do you verify that every energy source has been identified?
- Have you ever discovered an isolation point that was initially overlooked?
- What makes complex jobs more likely to have missed lockout points?
- How can coworkers help verify that the lockout is complete before work begins?
- What steps can we take to ensure we never rely on assumptions during hazardous energy control?

Closing Thought

Safe work isn't built on assumptions—it's built on verification. Taking one last look before the job begins may only take a minute, but it can prevent an incident that lasts a lifetime.