



July 8 — Close Isn't Good Enough

When going through LOTO the department locked out the wrong breaker	They broke the seal and removed the lock from the wrong breaker and locked the right one out and we reverified the whole lock out
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A lock doesn't make equipment safe...

The correct lock on the correct energy source does.

While preparing equipment for maintenance, employees discovered that the wrong breaker had been locked out. At first glance, it appeared that the Lockout/Tagout process had been completed correctly. However, a careful verification revealed that the breaker controlling the equipment had not actually been isolated.

Because the mistake was caught before work began, the crew was able to correct the lockout and safely complete the job without exposing anyone to hazardous energy.

It's easy to become familiar with equipment you've worked on many times before. Familiarity can lead us to assume we're looking at the right breaker, valve, or disconnect. That's why verification is one of the most important steps in every Lockout/Tagout procedure. We don't verify because we expect someone to make a mistake we verify because everyone is human.

Hazards

- Unexpected equipment startup
- Exposure to hazardous electrical energy
- Incorrect energy isolation
- Assumptions and familiarity
- Serious injury or fatality

Words of Wisdom

A successful Lockout/Tagout doesn't end when the lock is installed—it ends when you've verified the correct energy source has been isolated. Never assume. Always verify.

Pause and Think

- What could have happened if the incorrect breaker had not been discovered?
- Why is verification just as important as placing the lock?
- How can familiarity with equipment increase the risk of making a mistake?
- What steps do you take to confirm you've identified the correct breaker or disconnect?
- How can a second set of eyes help prevent LOTO errors?

Closing Thought

Locking out the wrong breaker creates a false sense of security. The safest crews don't just apply locks they verify that every source of hazardous energy has been isolated before anyone begins work.