



October 22 — Don't Just Point It Out, Verify It

While performing a lockout verification with customer, the customer's employee did not do a good job at explaining what was locked out. He basically walked by valves with locks and pointed at them.

When he was done, I explained to him I had no idea what was actually locked out and that he needed to do a better job. Walk the lockout like a checklist and ensure everyone understands. I then walked the lockout down by myself and checked each valve was the correct one to be locked out before signing the sheet.

Learning: Everyone Needs to Understand the Lockout

A LOTO verification is more than walking through an area and looking at locks. The purpose of the walkthrough is to verify that the correct energy sources have been identified and isolated and that everyone involved understands what has been locked out.

During this observation, the customer's employee walked by the valves and pointed at the locks but did not explain what was actually locked out. From the observer's perspective, simply pointing at the locks did not provide enough information to understand what each lock represented.

The observer addressed the concern and explained that the lockout needed to be walked like a checklist, with the specific isolation points identified and understood. The observer then walked the lockout independently and checked each valve to make sure it was the correct valve to be locked out before signing the sheet.

This is an important distinction: seeing a lock is not the same as verifying an isolation. A good walkthrough should allow the person performing the verification to understand what is locked out, why it is locked out, and that the correct isolation points have been identified.

Taking the time to explain the lockout also creates an opportunity for questions. If someone cannot clearly explain what they are showing you, that is a reason to slow down and verify rather than simply continuing through the checklist.

A thorough LOTO verification should leave everyone with the same understanding of the isolation not just the person who performed the lockout.

Hazards

- Incorrect valve identified during LOTO
- Incomplete understanding of energy isolation
- Failure to identify the correct isolation points.
- Relying on visual confirmation of locks alone
- Signing a verification without fully understanding the lockout.

Words of Wisdom

A lock tells you something has been secured. Verification tells you whether the right thing has been secured. Walk it like a checklist and make sure everyone understands what is locked out.

Pause and Think

- Can I clearly explain what has been locked out?
- Do I know what each lock is securing?
- Have we verified that each isolation point is the correct one?
- Would another person understand the lockout from my explanation?
- Am I comfortable signing the verification because I actually understand the isolation?

Closing Thought

Don't just look for locks verify the isolation. If everyone can't clearly explain what is locked out, slow down and walk it through again.

See Something • Say Something • Do Something