**Lockout/Tagout**

**Locking Out and Tagging Equipment**
Every year people are injured in the workplace, sometimes fatally, when equipment or machinery they are working on is accidentally operated. Accidents like these can be avoided with correct locking out and tagging procedures.

**What is Locking Out and Tagging Out?**
Locking out of equipment or machinery is the most effective way of preventing it becoming operational during maintenance. Its effectiveness lies in the "one key per lock, one lock per person" procedure.

If there is only one key per lock, the key has to be with the person carrying out the maintenance. Where more than one person is working on equipment or machinery a multi-lock system should be followed, ensuring that each person has attached a "personal" lock to the equipment or machine's multi-lock switch. All workplaces must have a system unless the equipment or machinery is fully inoperative and then disconnected from the energy source.

Essentially, there are two types of tag, the "DANGER" tag and the "OUT OF SERVICE" tag.

**Danger Tags**
Danger tags are used for a variety of hazards that may be involved in equipment and machinery maintenance, such as moving parts, electricity, steam, gas, liquid, or toxic substances.

If any work is to be carried out on a particular piece of machinery or equipment and there is a possibility of somebody inadvertently turning it on, the person carrying out the work must personally fasten a red and black "DANGER" tag or lock to the main isolating switch or valve.

As with locking out, if more than one person is undertaking the work, each person must fit their own personal lock or tag to the machine. Each tag must be printed with the person's name and their section, and give the date and time it was attached to the switch or valve. No one must operate a switch or valve that has been locked or tagged "DANGER" until the lock or tag has been removed, and only the person who attached the lock or tag is allowed to remove it.

**"Out of Service" Tags**
Yellow and black "OUT OF SERVICE" tags are to be used to prevent accidents or damage to machinery that is out of service for repairs or alterations. These tags are used in the same way as "DANGER" tags, except that only a supervisor can remove an "OUT OF SERVICE" tag. If possible, both tags AND locks shall be used. This will provide both visual and physical protection. As a further precaution, a portable sign can also be placed in front of the equipment or machine, or it can be cordoned off with a barrier or rope.

Once a locking-out and tagging system has been introduced, it must be strictly enforced. If the system is not always followed, it becomes ineffective and dangerous.

Safety locks and tags are readily available from most distributors of industrial safety products.
Color Coding
Standards recommend specific colors for the marking of physical hazards and the identification of certain equipment in industry. Colors used are red, yellow, green and blue.

- Red & White: Signifies danger and prohibition, fire protection equipment, stop buttons for electrical switches and emergency stop controls for machinery.
- Yellow & Black: Signifies caution: draws attention to such hazards as unfastened or removed machinery guards.
- Green & White: Denotes safety and location of safety or first aid equipment.
- Blue & White: Is for information signs where there is no specific hazard.