



SAFETY MATTERS

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HAMILTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FACILITIES

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news & notes

YOUR ROLE IN SECURITY

The County's security procedures are in place for your protection.

Follow them! For example:

- Report any unauthorized strangers to the Hamilton County Sheriff – 946-5373.
- Meet visitors in the lobby and escort them while in the facility.
- Where metal detectors are present, require them to go through them.
- Don't open strange or suspicious packages. Contact the Sheriff - 946-5373.
- Apply any company no-return policy to former employees.
- Stay near a phone when working late. Make sure others know you are there.
- Keep Emergency phone numbers handy.
- Guard all security information, access codes, etc.
- Arrange a danger signal or code phrase to alert coworkers to trouble.
- Don't try to be a hero! Do only what you must to stay safe.

Maintenance and Worker Safety

Focusing on the Basics to Improve Maintenance Worker Safety

Those who perform maintenance and repair in our buildings to keep them operating efficiently can be exposed to many potential safety risks. According to the most recent U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics job fatality report, deaths in the maintenance related category in the United States were up 14% in 2011, the highest level since 2006.

Among the reported risks were:

- Falls from working at heights
- Confined spaces or harsh environments associated with accessing equipment
- Shocks and burns if power is not properly isolated
- Injuries from moving machine parts
- Musculoskeletal problems due to exerting force or work in awkward spaces
- Exposure to asbestos, chemicals, dust, and excessive noise.

Clearly, those who perform maintenance tasks in the workplace to protect other workers need protection themselves in the form of training, safe work procedures, protective equipment, and the cooperation of other employees, supervisors, and management.

Some Basic Ways to Increase Safety in Maintenance Work

- Emphasize planning and scheduling on every maintenance task. Maintenance that is planned and scheduled is by nature less risky than middle-of-the-night emergency repairs.
- Invest in affordable technology such as a thermographic camera (around \$1,000). These cameras are used to detect variations of temperature that can reveal when a machine motor is not running properly.
- Make sure leaders consistently convey the right message. Employees need to be told that accidents happen as a result of short cuts, such as failing to lock out a piece of equipment before performing maintenance.
- Teach workers to intervene. If someone walks by a piece of equipment that's making an unusual noise and fails to inform a supervisor, it's the same as ignoring a co-worker who is working unsafely.
- Get employees and supervisors engaged and accountable for safety. This can lead to culture change in which safety is part of everything that's done at the facilities, not solely the responsibility of the safety department.

SAFETY BY COMMITTEE

The Hamilton County Facilities Safety Committee meets on the first Wednesday of each month and consists of both employees and management. The purpose of this committee is to be a tool and a platform to promote safety, solve safety problems, and recommend improvements to the Hamilton County Facilities' Workplace Safety Program. Its goal is to promote safe work practices and safe working conditions for all our employees.

Characteristics of successful safety committee members include:

- Commitment to workplace safety
- Concern for co-workers
- Leadership qualities
- Ability to work cooperatively with co-workers and management

Other strategies for success include:

- Choose the right employees, making sure that every member wants and deserves to be there.
- Avoid making a decision just to get an item off the table. Stay with issues until you come up with a solution that has a strong chance of succeeding.
- Admit mistakes--there's nothing wrong with trial and error.
- Monitor new policies and procedures to be sure they work. If they don't, change them.
- Assign individual members specific projects with follow-up responsibility.
- Make communication a priority with both employees, management, and among committee members.
- Never forget that the ultimate goal of the committee is a safe and healthy work environment.

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Lockout-Tagout: 6 Common Mistakes

Don't treat your safety in a hit-or-miss fashion

Any powered equipment is potentially dangerous, even if it's supposed to be shut down! Many needless accidents occur because somebody turns on a machine that other employees are repairing. "I didn't know anyone was working on it" is the usual explanation in accident investigations. And more often than not, these are serious injuries resulting in amputations, serious fractures, and death. Any energy source--electrical, mechanical, pneumatic, hydraulic, or gas--can be deadly if not controlled. Lockout-tagout is the one sure way to prevent these accidents from happening to you.

Machine injuries resulting from inadvertent startup are so important that there are federal safety regulations covering them--OSHA's lockout/tagout standard 29 CFR 1910.147. Lockout means placing a lock on a device that prevents the release of energy, such as an electric circuit breaker, a disconnect switch, a line valve, a block, and others. Tagout means attaching a tag on a switch or other shutoff device that warns others not to start up the equipment.

No lockout system will be effective if it is undertaken in a hit-or-miss fashion. Here are some common mistakes in lockouts. See how many you've been guilty of:

- **Mistake 1:** "This job will only take a few minutes. I don't need to use a lock--I'll just shut it down."
- **Mistake 2:** Your co-worker pulls the switch and correctly locks it out. Then you place your lock through his lock. When he finishes up first, he removes his lock and leaves yours lying on the ground near the switch. Now you have no protection. Always use a multiple lockout device when more than one person is servicing the equipment.
- **Mistake 3:** You're afraid you're going to lose the key, so you leave it in the lock. Again, this does not protect you and can be dangerous.
- **Mistake 4:** "Joe, could you take my lock and shut off the machinery and lock it out while I get my tools together?" Don't depend on the other guy! Do the shutoff and lockout yourself.
- **Mistake 5:** You locked out the control circuit and thought that was good enough. Wrong! The main disconnect or switch must be locked out too. Even one drop of water or a few particles of dust can cause a machine to operate without anyone pressing any start buttons.
- **Mistake 6:** Everything is correctly locked out and you're ready to go to work. You've only got an hour to finish the job. Stop! Before you do anything, take a few moments to test the controls to make sure they are definitely inoperative.



**Multiple Lockout Device -
Locked and Tagged**

As you can see, it is up to you, the employee, to perform a proper lockout. Ask to see County Facility's written lockout procedures for the equipment for which you are responsible. Make sure you have received lockout/tagout training and understand exactly what to do. Your life may depend on it!