Introduction

Every year large numbers of workers are injured in industrial accidents resulting from the ***unexpected*** energisation, start-up or release of stored energy. By ensuring that Lockout / Tagout procedures are followed the risk of such incidents and accidents can be prevented.

This energy can take many forms, which may include:

Electrical energy
- commonly found powering nearly all workplace equipment

Hydraulic energy
- commonly found powering forklifts, cutting equipment and pumps

Mechanical energy
- commonly found in all machinery with moving parts

Thermal energy
- commonly found in equipment such as ovens or freezers (hot **or** cold)

Pneumatic energy
- commonly found powering machinery via compressed air or gas

Potential
- commonly found in compressed springs or suspended weights

Current UK Legislation

Legislation has been put in place to prevent such accidents occurring by controlling unauthorised or accidental use of energy. *The Provision and Use of Work Equipment 1998, Section 19 Energy* and *Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, Regulation 13* both specifically cover these aspects.

In addition *The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974* and *The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999*, both state that an employer should **'make suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of his employees'** and ensure their **'health, safety and welfare at work'**.

In addition the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 also states that it is also the responsibility of the employee to ensure the **'health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions of work'.**

What is Lockout Tagout?

LOCKOUT is a physical method of keeping equipment from being re-energised, guard against unexpected movement, release of stored energy and the flow of gases and fluids.

E.g. to isolate an electrical circuit turn the appropriate breaker to the off position and place a lockout device in place to keep it in this position. A padlock is then put in place on the lockout device to ensure it can only be removed by the person who locked it off.

TAGOUT is a highly visible warning placed on the equipment which has been isolated. The tag should be of sufficient durability for the conditions, attached securely and provide details of the person who applied it.

Note that a TAGOUT system should not be used without an appropriate LOCKOUT procedure as it does not provide the same measure of protection.

When should Lockout Tagout be used?

Lockout / Tagout procedure should be followed during repair or maintenance of equipment where a worker could be injured by the unexpected start up or release of stored energy, such as the need to:

- remove or bypass a guard or other safety device
- place any part of their body where it could be caught by moving machinery
- has to enter or partially enter the area where a machine or piece of equipment may operate (i.e. the danger area around a robotic arm)

An employer should put in place an appropriate Lockout / Tagout procedure and provide all the necessary equipment and training, but it is the responsibility of the employer and employee to follow this.

Depending on the machinery in question various different Lockout devices may be needed. Enough should be provided so that each employee has them when needed.