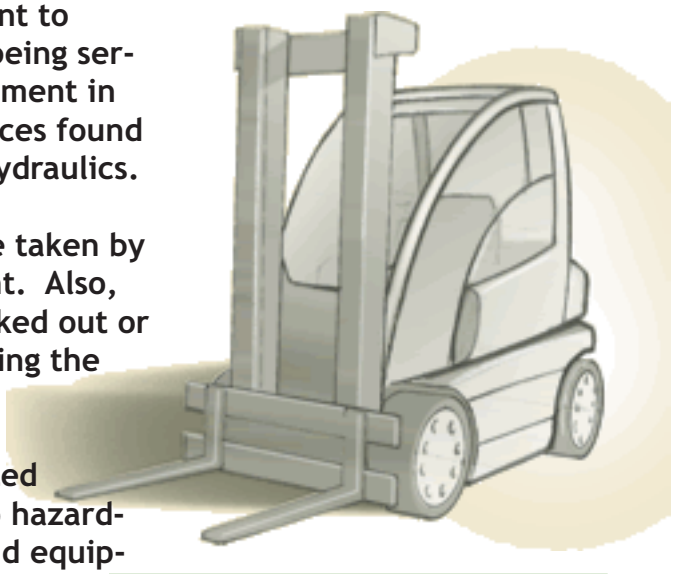
Lockout / Tagout - Basics

Lockout / Tagout procedures are extremely important to protect employees from injury while equipment is being serviced and even operated. A common piece of equipment in many companies is the forklift. Typical energy sources found on equipment like this are electricity, gravity and hydraulics.



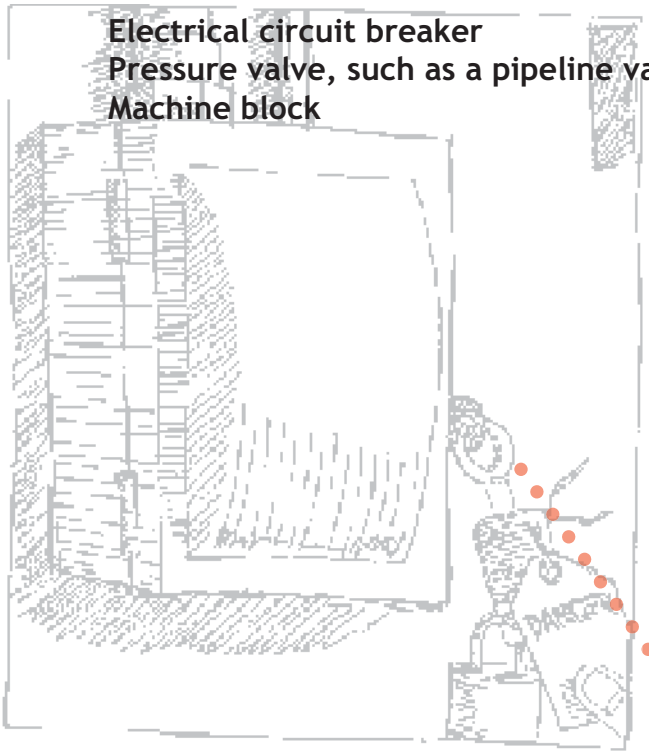
Before servicing equipment like this steps should be taken by a person who is authorized to service the equipment. Also, equipment deemed unsafe to operate should be locked out or tagged out to protect the employee from injury during the operation of the equipment.

Hazardous energy is controlled and injuries prevented in several ways. Lockout devices restricts access to hazardous energy. Locking devices prevents machinery and equipment from being turned on. Warning tags are used when lockout is not feasible or available.

Before you perform any servicing or maintenance on a machine or equipment where the unexpected energizing, startup, or release of stored energy could occur and cause injury, the machine or equipment must be isolated from the energy source and rendered inoperative.

Examples of an isolation device include:

Electrical circuit breaker
Pressure valve, such as a pipeline valve
Machine block



In this case of an isolation device the circuit breaker is housed inside this box. Power is distributed or shut off via a switch or breaker inside the box. This box may be lockout with a lock and tagged appropriately.

An employee who services machinery and equipment, is known as an “authorized” employee.

An employee who operates machinery or equipment but does not service them, is known as an “affected” employee.

Both types of employees should receive lockout / tagout training.

Before servicing equip. it is the responsibility of the authorized employee to notify the affected employee(s).

Don’t forget about stored energy. Removal of stored energy (like an forklift with the forks in the air, or a pressurized tank) is a step towards preventing unexpected start up.