

# MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Lockout/Tagout Can Save Your Life



Machinery or equipment that starts up unexpectedly while someone is performing maintenance or repairs can be a very serious hazard.

I have a friend in this area who had recently returned from two tours of duty with the U.S. Army in Vietnam, unscathed and unharmed. He had returned to his job prior to his military duty at a local tractor dealership. He laid down on the shop floor to work on a bush hog after he checked the ignition and made sure that there was no one around the tractor when he started to check the implement. As he was looking under the skirt of the mower, someone inadvertently and not looking mounted the tractor and started the engine. The bush hog was engaged and the blade caught him across the temple and left side of his head. Another mechanic who was walking by saw the accident and alerted the guy in the cab. He was rushed to North MS Medical Center in Tupelo, 16 miles away.

After he was stable, the Air Evac Helicopter airlifted him to the Med in Memphis. He was immediately operated on and had titanium plates placed in his head. Obviously, he was hospitalized for many months with his condition in jeopardy and no promise of his condition after rehab. The plates are permanent; he walks with a limp and has a slight speech impediment. If there had been a lockout/tagout procedure in effect, the accident probably wouldn't have happened. I'm sure that some of you have similar stories like this one.

Working in agriculture is dangerous and presents many unique hazards. We try to inform and relay all the ideas concerning safety that we can, but in our day-to-day rush, we sometimes overlook items and take some of our tasks too much for granted. This is where the danger starts, as the experience above shows.

A lockout/tagout procedure doesn't have to be a fancy board with all the various types of lockout and tagout gadgets available. A simple system installed at each facility would require a tag, and the key to the implement being taken out and hung on a board while maintenance is being done, batteries being disconnected, implements being immobilized and training to everyone involved looking around the implement and checking before approaching the implement before repairs are started. A similar incident, like the one above, can be reduced to only a potential of a debilitating accident or no accident at all.

## HAZARDS EXIST WHENEVER:

- Protective guards and shields are removed.
- Equipment or implements are put into an unusual position.
- Adjusting equipment or repairing parts to it.

Everyone who operates, adjusts, removes jams or parts, lubricates, repairs or works on a machine should follow the lockout/tagout procedure.

It doesn't take a rocket science to set up a simple procedure and orient all employees on how you want the system to work. A procedure needed is for key removal, battery disconnects or other procedures that will insure that the disablement of the tractor, implement or attachment is disabled while repairs, adjustments or changes of implements are being made.

## EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE PROGRAM:

### Employer:

- Establish and implement an effective lockout/tag out procedure.
- Train and educate all employees about the procedure, stressing the importance of preventing injuries.
- Identify all power sources that will require lockout/tag out procedures, including electrical circuits, hydraulic and pneumatic systems, spring-loaded systems and gravity type system.
- If a "canned" system is purchased, assign a lock/tag to each person with his or her name on it. If your option were to have a system without ignition locks, it would be prudent to have all personnel who have been oriented to sign off on a log to verify their involvement.
- After the work is completed, be sure that the employees involved follow the correct procedure for restarting the implement.

### Employee:

- Neutralize power sources. Disconnect the electrical or ignition system. Block movable parts. If it is an elevated repair, make sure that jacks are placed in strategic locations to stabilize the tractor or implement while it is elevated. Release or block spring energy systems. Lower suspended attachments to a rest position on the floor or ground.
- Follow the installed lockout/tagout procedure that has been implemented. Complete a tag with repair explanations.
- **NEVER ASSUME ANYTHING REGARDING THE IMPLEMENT: CHECK THE POWER SOURCE FOR DISABLEMENT AND OTHER PARTS FOR NEUTRALIZATION.**

**GUARD AGAINST MAN EATING  
MACHINES!  
DON'T WORK ALONE ~  
WATCH FOR OTHERS!!**