

## **news & notes**

### **THE LOWDOWN ON LOTO**

More than 120 deaths and thousands of injuries occur annually because equipment unexpectedly starts up or releases energy. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), failure to control hazardous energy accounts for nearly 10 percent of serious incidents in many industries.

Energy sources including electrical, mechanical, hydraulic, pneumatic, chemical, thermal, or other energy sources in machines and equipment can harm workers. Potential injuries include electrocution, burns, crushing, cutting, lacerating, amputating, or fracturing body parts.

OSHA requires lockout/tagout (LOTO) whenever servicing or maintenance operations on machines or equipment could cause injuries from unexpected energization or startup or release of stored energy.

In addition, all employees who work in an area where energy control is in use must be instructed in the purpose and use of the procedures.



**"What am I doing? Inspecting hazards, just like you asked!"**



**March 2017**

## **Safety Is in Your Hands**

### ***Do your share for a safer workplace***

When you think about workplace safety responsibilities, you probably think about all the regulations and all the requirements OSHA puts on management to identify hazards and protect you and your co-workers. And it's true that management does have a big share in the responsibility for workplace safety. But OSHA also gives you a share of responsibility for safety on the job.

In return for the right to a safe workplace, OSHA assigns certain specific responsibilities to you and your co-workers, including the responsibility to:

- Obey OSHA standards.
- Follow workplace safety and health rules.
- Use assigned personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Participate in required safety training.
- Report hazardous conditions to management so they can take swift corrective action.
- Report job-related accidents, injuries, and illness to your supervisor and get medical attention.
- Cooperate with OSHA inspectors if they come to inspect our facility.

In addition to these OSHA-assigned safety responsibilities, we ask you to also:

- Take responsibility for learning everything you need to know about your job and work area so that you can always work safely.
- Avoid taking risks and engaging in any unsafe acts.
- Talk to your supervisor any time you have a question about your safety.
- Cooperate in our safety inspection and hazard analysis programs.
- Participate in safety committees and other safety initiatives.
- Look for ways to make your job and the workplace safer and make suggestions about how to do that.

If we all do our share and take responsibility for our safety and the safety of all our co-workers, we can't fail in our mission to prevent accidents, injuries, and work-related illness. Sure, it's a big job, and we have to remain vigilant and strive every day to hunt down and eliminate hazards. But together we can do it! Won't you pitch in and join with your co-workers? We need you to succeed.

## news & notes

### TIMELY TAX TIPS

To avoid headaches on Tax Day:

- Check your W-4 form for accuracy and currency. This check will help you avoid penalties for having too much or too little tax withheld.
- Organize records and receipts you need to complete your return.
- Use the right forms and schedules. If you're not sure which to use, call or go online and check with the IRS or the state tax office.
- Don't do your taxes at the last minute. Your haste to meet the filing deadline may cause you to overlook tax savings and increase your risk of making an error.
- Take advantage of free tax assistance. Go online or call the toll-free federal and state tax assistance numbers listed in the tax instruction booklets or the blue pages of your phone book.
- Double-check your math and the required information before mailing your returns.
- File electronically and have your refund deposited directly into your bank account.
- Request a filing extension if you're running late.

## Bottom 10 List

### *The world's worst excuses for not working safely*

Have you ever tried to justify not working safely or heard a co-worker making excuses for unsafe acts? Few of us are immune from occasionally making excuses or taking risks. Here are 10 of the worst excuses for not working safely:

1. **I didn't know**—Why didn't you ask your supervisor to find out before you started working?
2. **I wasn't paying attention**—What *were* you thinking about? What could be more important than keeping alert to hazards while you work?
3. **I meant to, but**—But what?
4. **I forgot**—How could you forget about something as important as your own safety?
5. **I didn't have time**—Do you have time to be laid up in the hospital because of an accident?
6. **It could have happened to anybody**—Then why did it happen to you?
7. **We were just fooling around**—Will you still think it was fun when someone gets hurt?
8. **PPE is uncomfortable**—Would you be more comfortable without an eye, with a hole in your head, or with toxic vapors in your lungs?
9. **Rules are for fools**—And what do you call someone who ignores a rule made for his or her own safety and takes a reckless risk?
10. **I thought it would be okay just this once**—And so just how many times *do* you have to take a risk before you have an accident?

When you get right down to it, there really is no *good* excuse for unsafe acts.

---

## Not too late to vaccinate

### *Avoid getting—and spreading—the flu this year*

In most parts of the country, influenza activity peaks between December and March. Flu vaccines are important for everyone, including infants over the age of 6 months and pregnant women. The flu vaccine protects the person who receives it, of course, but it also protects others, including newborns and people who can't be vaccinated.

Don't wait until you're worried that you have been exposed to the flu to get the shot. A person who has the flu may be contagious before beginning to show symptoms. Moreover, it takes 2 weeks for the shot to become fully effective at protecting you.

The flu virus mutates readily, which is why you need a new vaccination each year—last year's vaccine won't provide adequate protection against newly mutated strains. But the current year's vaccine, even if it doesn't provide full protection, can at least reduce the severity of the flu if you do get it.

In addition to getting your flu shots, avoid spreading the flu by:

- Staying home when ill and limiting your contact with others;
- Covering your coughs or sneezes with a sleeve or disposable tissue;
- Washing your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer; *and*
- Not touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.



888-393-2667

[www.firstbenefits.org](http://www.firstbenefits.org)