SKILLSIGNAL™
Construction Safety & Compliance

TOOLBOX TALK

Group Lockout: One Lock Per Person, No Matter How Many People

TOPIC NO.	DURATION	AUDIENCE
LO-07	10 to 15 min	All Crew

OSHA REFERENCE 29 CFR 1910.147(f)(3) · 29 CFR 1910.147(d)(4) · 29 CFR 1910.147(f)(4)

PROJECT / JOBSITE	DATE	PRESENTED BY

01 THE HOOK

START HERE

Four people are working on the same conveyor: an electrician in the motor control cabinet, two mechanics replacing rollers, and a laborer cleaning the pit under the tail pulley. The lead mechanic put his lock on the disconnect this morning. At three o'clock his part of the job is done, so he takes his lock off and tells the operator it is good to go. The laborer is still in the pit. One lock protected one man and three others were trusting it without knowing it. The standard has a rule for this, and it is the simplest rule in the whole program: every person inside the machine has their own lock on it, and the machine cannot start until the last one comes off.

02 WHAT THE STANDARD REQUIRES

29 CFR 1910.147(d)(4)(i): lockout devices are affixed **"by authorized employees."** Plural, each one. **1910.147(f)(3)**, group lockout: when a crew services equipment together, they must use a procedure that gives each person **"a level of protection equivalent to that provided by the implementation of a personal lockout or tagout device."** Then it gets specific:

☐ **(f)(3)(ii)(A)**: **primary responsibility is vested in one authorized employee** for a set number of workers, under one group lockout device.

☐ **(f)(3)(ii)(B)**: the primary authorized employee **verifies that all individual steps are done** and the machine is isolated before anyone goes in.

☐ **(f)(3)(ii)(C)**: when more than one crew or trade is involved, one authorized employee is **designated to coordinate** and keep continuity of protection.

☐ **(f)(3)(ii)(D)**: **each authorized employee affixes a personal lockout device to the group device** when they begin work, and **removes it when they stop**. Nobody else removes it for them.

03 TWO WAYS TO DO IT

METHOD 1

THE MULTI-LOCK HASP

Best for one or two isolation points and a small crew.

✗ **DON'T SHARE ONE LOCK**

One lock on the disconnect, "covering" everybody. The owner of that lock can remove it whenever his part is done, and the machine is live for everyone else. A shared lock protects one person and endangers the rest.

✓ **HASP ON THE DEVICE, A LOCK FROM EVERY PERSON**

A scissor hasp goes on the disconnect (or valve) in the isolated position. **Each** authorized employee hangs **their own** lock on the hasp before starting. The hasp cannot open and the device cannot be operated until **every** lock is off. Last one out takes the last lock. If three isolation points exist, three hasps, and every person locks every one.

METHOD 2

THE GROUP LOCK BOX

Best for many isolation points and a large or multi-trade crew.

✗ **DON'T HAND THE KEYS AROUND**

Primary locks on twelve valves and disconnects, keys in the lead's pocket. If the lead leaves, or hands the keys to someone, the twelve locks mean nothing to the people inside the machine.

✓ **KEYS IN THE BOX, A LOCK FROM EVERY PERSON ON THE BOX**

The **primary authorized employee** places a lock (keyed-alike set is fine) on **every** isolation point, verifies zero energy, and drops **all the keys** into the group lock box. Then they put their personal lock on the box. Then **each** authorized employee puts their own personal lock on the box before starting work and takes it off when done. Nobody can get the keys to the isolation locks until **every** personal lock is off the box. The primary pulls the keys last and restores the machine.

04 THE RULES THAT MAKE IT WORK

RULE 1

YOUR LOCK GOES ON BEFORE YOUR BODY GOES IN

Not after you "take a quick look." Not when the lead says the machine is locked. Your lock on the hasp or the box is the only thing that proves to the whole site that you are inside.

RULE 2

YOUR LOCK COMES OFF ONLY WHEN YOU ARE OUT

Done for the day, done with your task, going to lunch and not coming back: take your lock off. Still have a task left: leave it on. Breaks and lunch with the lock still on are fine as long as the program and the primary know it.

RULE 3

THE PRIMARY VERIFIES, EVERYONE TRUSTS BUT CHECKS

The primary authorized employee proves zero energy before the group starts. That does not stop you from asking to see the gauge or the test. If you are going into the machine, you are allowed to know how it was proven safe.

RULE
4

SHIFT CHANGE: THE BOX STAYS LOCKED

1910.147(f)(4) requires continuity of protection through shift and personnel changes. Incoming authorized employees put their locks on the box or hasp **before** outgoing ones remove theirs. A gap of thirty seconds with no locks on the box is a gap with no protection.

⚠ **“HIS LOCK COVERS ME” IS NOT A THING**

There is no such thing as being protected by somebody else’s lock. Not the lead’s, not the foreman’s, not the electrician’s. Equivalent protection under (f)(3) means your own lock, applied by you, removed by you. If you are inside a machine and your lock is not on it, you are relying on a stranger to remember you exist.

05 WHY IT MATTERS

[JOBSITE]

FOR THE CREW

A hasp costs a few dollars. A lock box costs under a hundred. Either one turns a four-person job from “we think everyone is out” into a physical count of locks on a box. Inspectors ask how multi-person lockout is handled; the box is the answer.

[INDIVIDUAL]

FOR YOU

Your lock is the only vote you get on whether the machine restarts. Everybody else on the crew gets a vote too. The machine runs only when every vote is yes.

[HOME]

FOR LIFE OFF-SITE

Two people working on the same car in the garage: both of you hold a reason it cannot start. The battery cable stays off until both say so.

06 TODAY’S DRILL

TODAY’S DRILL **COUNT LOCKS, COUNT PEOPLE**

The next multi-person lockout on this site, before anyone enters the machine, the primary authorized employee counts the locks on the hasp or box and counts the people going in. The numbers match or nobody starts. At the end, count again before the last lock comes off. Then open the lockout kit and confirm there are enough hasps and a group lock box for the biggest crew this site runs.

07 CREW DISCUSSION

Take 2 minutes. Pick one.

1. Has anyone here ever worked on a machine while a different person's lock was the only one on it? What were you trusting?
2. Does this site have a group lock box? Where is it, and when was it last used?
3. How does a lockout get handed off at shift change here? Is there ever a moment with no lock on the device?

08 ATTENDANCE & SIGN-OFF

All attendees confirm they participated in this Toolbox Talk and understand the content covered.

NAME (PRINT)	SIGNATURE

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

_____ Date: _____

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