

# LEGISLATIVE INTERPRETATIONS

Topic: Code of Practice for Group Lockout	Issued by: V.P., WorkSafe Services
Statute: Regulation 91-191	Date Issued: November 15, 2005
Section: 240	Date Revised:

**240** Where the lockout procedure referred to in section 239 is inappropriate for the cleaning, maintenance, adjustments or repairs to be performed or is inadequate for the protection of an employee, an employer shall

- (a) establish a code of practice in consultation with the joint health and safety committee or health and safety representative, if any, specifying personnel responsibilities, personnel training and details of procedure for the neutralization, clearance, release and start-up of the machine, and
- (b) comply with and enforce the code of practice.

**Question:**

What is required in a code of practice for group lockout?

**Answer:**

The code of practice is a well-conceived plan based on a **risk assessment** that allows a specific task to be accomplished safely without full compliance with the individual lockout provisions found in section 239.

When more than three employees or more than five energy isolating devices are involved in the lockout, a code of practice for group lockout may be developed. The code of practice for group lockout must:

- Be developed in consultation with the JHSC or the health and safety representative
- Specify
  - the responsibilities of everyone involved
  - the training everyone involved must have
  - the procedure to follow in performing the task from the moment the normal operation of the machine is suspended to when it is resumed
- Be complied with and enforced by the employer

Based on the machine, equipment, processes and energy isolating devices, it may be necessary for more than one competent person to be involved in obtaining a zero energy state. In determining whether more than one competent person is required, the employer (in consultation with the JHSC or where none exist, a health and safety representative or an

employee involved in the work) will consider such matters as the number of different energy isolating devices and the expertise required to undertake the work to ensure the safety of all involved.

The procedure to follow in performing the task must include, but may not be limited to, the following steps:

- 1) The competent person(s) applies a lock and tag to each energy isolating device identified in the code of practice (circuit breaker, disconnect switch, line valve, block, etc.).
- 2) The competent person(s)
  - (a) Release(s) all stored energy
  - (b) Verifies that de-energization has been accomplished by: for example,
    - (i) testing circuitry
    - (ii) performing load verification cycling
    - (iii) visually inspecting the position
    - (iv) manually trying controls
    - (v) monitoring movement or discharge
    - (vi) observing bleeds, gauges, indicators, etc
  - (c) Places all keys for the locks applied to the energy isolating devices in a lockable device (lock box or key ring)
  - (d) Applies their lock and tag (or other means of identification) to the lockable device
- 3) The employees who will be working on the machine
  - (a) Familiarize themselves with the energy-isolating devices
  - (b) Assess the adequacy of the energy isolating devices for the work to be performed
  - (c) Apply their personal lock and tag with name (if no means of identification on the lock such as name, employee number or picture) to the lockable device, and
  - (d) Are given the opportunity to verify the zero energy state; *Employees only begin work after they have applied their personal lock to the lockable device.*
- 4) As the employees complete their work
  - (a) They remove all non-essential items from the work site
  - (b) They remove their personal lock from the lockable device  
*If an employee needs to return to the machine for whatever reason, they must reapply their personal lock to the lockable device.*
- 5) When all employees have removed their personal locks from the lockable device, the competent person(s)
  - (a) Remove(s) their lock from the lockable device
  - (b) Takes the keys to the locks on the energy isolating devices from the lockable device
  - (c) Walks down and around the machine to check that
    - (i) work is finished,
    - (ii) guards are in place and
    - (iii) all employees and tools are clear
  - (d) Removes the locks from the energy isolating devices

If the cleaning, maintenance, adjustments or repairs extends beyond one shift or involves employees from two or more different employers, the code of practice for group lockout must contain procedures to ensure the continuity of protection from departing to incoming employees/contractors and competent person(s).

In order to practice group lockout that is so complex that it cannot comply with the code of Practice for Group Lockout allowed by section 240 and described above, a deviation must be obtained from the chief compliance officer.

Group lockout could be considered complex for the following reasons:

- The physical extent of the equipment or process being serviced
- The relative inaccessibility of the energy isolating devices
- The number of employees involved
- The number of energy isolating devices to be isolated
- The length of time equipment or processes will be isolated
- The interdependence and interrelationship of the components in the system or between different systems

The new CSA standard *Z460-05, Control of hazardous energy - Lockout and other methods* and other similar standards available from standard setting agencies may be used for guidance in developing an effective and safe lockout program.