



## Hazardous Energy

"I'd gladly pay you three fingers Tuesday for a new dress today."

By Dan Zahlis

These are not the words of J. Wellington Wimpy from Popeye. This is the sentiment, and career strategy, of a safety coordinator in California. This approach to the "profession" has become commonplace.

Every several months, I hear from a different colleague in plant operations about another employee or contractor who has suffered an amputation or crushing injury. They don't seek my guidance to help them avoid such injuries. They seek my guidance to help them avoid OSHA penalties.

My recommendation to build sustainable prevention systems always is the same, and the tools I offer them are always free. Without exception, they opt for the guidance of high paid consultants and attorneys in dodging OSHA citations. They also choose to reward local managers that contribute to the deception of compliance officers rather than holding them accountable for failed performance. The reward for one safety coordinator failing to implement lockout/tagout procedures, but succeeding in leading OSHA astray, included a lovely new dress to wear to the company's annual picnic.

"Seven Digit Dave" couldn't make the company picnic this year because he was recovering in the hospital, and he had been fired for the infamous catchall: "Failure to follow safety rules," which clearly was stated in the employee handbook that he had signed following his 2-hour company orientation.

Safety "professionals" failing to implement effective systems to prevent injury, and continuing to accept rewards for duping regulators, essentially are bargaining the health and safety of others tomorrow for a paycheck today. How Wimpy!

After many years in the profession,

and having evaluated many programs, I rarely have seen a company develop a meaningful lockout/tagout process beyond the boilerplate written program. This often is due to a combination of management apathy, ineffectual OSHA enforcement, risk transfer via insurance and a compliance (vs. effectiveness) mentality. Another frequently cited reason for underperformance is the perceived burden of OSHA's Control of Hazardous Energy (Lockout/Tagout) Standard. Many employers perceive the requirements to be complicated and overwhelming, especially if machine-specific procedures never were developed.

Active Agenda relies on several modules to make lockout/tagout practical and achievable. The system requires the entry of all equipment possessing risk from hazardous energy. Energy sources, disconnecting means and control methods also are required entries. Once the equipment, energy sources, disconnecting means and controls are entered into the system, control procedures can be built. Specific steps can be entered for shutting down, isolating, blocking and securing each piece of equipment during cleaning, repairing, servicing and adjusting.

The system enables the "cloning" of procedures so that control steps for similar equipment can be modified, rather than building the procedures from the ground up. Cloning records is helpful for distributing work across an enterprise, whereby each facility can share the responsibility for developing control procedures for common equipment and sister locations can benefit from one another's effort.

Active Agenda modules can be easily customized to address company-

specific needs and concerns. As new fields are added to the system, they are automatically incorporated into data collection forms that can be printed and used to collect information from the field. Lockout/tagout procedures can be easily embedded within email notifications and distributed to affected facilities, departments, and personnel.

Active Agenda's Training module can be used to associate machine-specific lockout/tagout procedures with job titles, so that training currency may be tracked for authorized and affected persons.

### What Gets Measured

Active Agenda allows an organization to track and thereby quantify equipment possessing hazardous energy. The system measures and reports on data that can be used to prioritize procedure development. Charts can be generated to compare the number of control procedures developed at each facility, and as procedures are developed, key data is exposed to guide training priorities.

### What Gets Done

Knowledge of hazardous energy risk gets captured, machine-specific procedures get developed and knowledge gets shared. Safe work around hazardous energy gets done. **OH**

### This Month's Links:

**Demo:** <http://demo.activeagenda.net/list.php?mdl=hze>

**Forum:** <http://activeagenda.net/discussions/viewforum.php?f=44>

**Wiki:** [http://activeagenda.net/documentation/index.php?title=Hazardous\\_Energy\\_Module](http://activeagenda.net/documentation/index.php?title=Hazardous_Energy_Module)