

Worksite: _____ Instructor: _____ Date/Time: _____

Topic C431: Tagging Out of Service

Introduction: Due to accidental damage, wear from normal use, or manufacturing defects almost all tools, machines, equipment, and vehicles will at some point need repair. Regardless of the type, size, or use of the tool or equipment, federal regulations require that a damaged or defective item that might potentially present a hazard to employees be tagged "Out of Service", and removed from use until repaired or replaced. Failure to tag defective work items is one of the most common violations found in the workplace by federal and state inspectors.

Specifications for tags: The following are specific OSHA requirements for tags used to warn employees of hazardous conditions:

- Tags must be used as a means to prevent accidental injury or illness to employees who are exposed to hazardous or potentially hazardous conditions, equipment, or operations which are out of the ordinary, unexpected or not readily apparent. Tags shall be used until such time as the identified hazard is eliminated, or the hazardous operation is completed. Tags need not be used where signs, guarding or other positive means of protection are being used.
- Tags must contain a signal word and a major message.
- The signal word shall be either "Danger," "Caution," or "Biological Hazard," "BIOHAZARD," or the biological hazard symbol.
- Danger tags are used in major hazard situations where an immediate hazard presents a threat of death or serious injury to employees. Danger tags may be used only in these situations.
- Caution tags are used in minor hazard situations where a non-immediate or potential hazard or unsafe practice presents a lesser threat of employee injury. Caution tags may only be used in these situations.
- Warning tags may be used to represent a hazard level between "Caution" and "Danger" instead of the required "Caution" tag, provided that they have a signal word of "Warning," and an appropriate major message.
- The major message shall indicate the specific hazardous condition or the instruction to be communicated to the employee.
- The signal word must be readable at a minimum distance of five feet or a greater distance as warranted by the hazard.
- The tag's major message must be presented in either pictographs, written text or both.
- The signal word and the major message must be understandable to all employees who may be exposed to the identified hazard (if you have non-English speaking employees, you may need to post the tag in English and whatever language is appropriate).
- Tags must be affixed as close as safely possible to their respective hazards by a string, wire, or adhesive that prevents their loss or unintentional removal.

Danger tags are used in major hazard situations where an immediate hazard presents a threat of death or serious injury to employees.

Examples of common problems which must be tagged are: Frayed, worn, or damaged electrical cords; Broken or defective switches; Damaged or worn personal protective equipment; Damaged scaffold components; Loose, broken, or missing protective guards, and; Inoperative warning lights, signals, etc.

Biological hazard tags: Biological hazard tags must be used to identify the actual or potential presence of a biological hazard and to identify equipment, containers, rooms, experimental animals, or combinations thereof, that contains contaminated hazardous biological agents. For example an accident scene might contain tools, surfaces, or equipment contaminated with blood.

Conclusion: Use tags not only to protect employees from hazards on the job, but also to protect employers from code violations.

Employee Attendance: (Names or signatures of personnel who are attending this meeting)

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

These guidelines do not supersede local, state, or federal regulations and must not be construed as a substitute for, or legal interpretation of, any OSHA regulations.