

METHOD STATEMENT · UNITED KINGDOM · 2026

Electrical Isolation Method Statement

UK template and structure for an EAWR 1989 safe isolation method statement — lock-off, proving dead, GS38, re-energisation.

An electrical isolation method statement evidences compliance with regulation 14 of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 — no person shall work on or near a live conductor unless it is unreasonable for the work to be done dead, it is reasonable to do live, and suitable precautions are in place. In practice, the document describes the safe isolation sequence: identify the circuit, switch off, secure with lock-off, prove dead with a GS38-compliant test instrument, prove the test instrument on a known-live source, and finally apply caution notices.

Document structure a reviewer expects

- 1. Scope and circuit identification**
Specific circuit, consumer unit / DB location, drawing references, downstream loads affected.
- 2. Regulation 14 justification**
Confirm the work is being done dead; if any live element is unavoidable, document the three-part justification.
- 3. Coordination and consumer notification**
Named site contact informed; written approval where downstream consumers are affected.
- 4. Isolation sequence**
Switch off → lock off (personal lock) → prove voltage indicator on known-live source → prove circuit dead → re-prove voltage indicator.
- 5. GS38-compliant test equipment**
Voltage indicator make / model, finger barriers, fused test leads, exposed tips $\leq 4\text{mm}$, last calibration date.
- 6. Caution notices and barriers**
Locations of caution notices, barriers around any open enclosures, exclusion zones.
- 7. Work activity**
Step-by-step description of the work performed under isolation.
- 8. Re-energisation sequence**
Final visual sweep, panels refitted, personnel clear, lock removal in reverse order, switch on, voltage verified, consumer informed.
- 9. Competence**
Operative competence — JIB grading or equivalent, BS 7671 qualifications, training in safe isolation.

Common reasons reviewers reject this document

- Lock-off described but the lock is not a personal lock — shared keys or supervisor-controlled locks are non-compliant.
- Proving sequence missing the 'prove the prover' step (re-test the voltage indicator on a known-live source after testing the circuit).

- Test equipment specified without GS38 features (finger barriers, fused leads, exposed tips $\leq 4\text{mm}$).
- No regulation 14 justification — the document assumes the work will be done dead without recording the EAWR position.
- Re-energisation sequence omitted or one-line ('switch back on') — has to mirror the isolation sequence in detail.
- No coordination with downstream consumers where the isolation affects others — required under BS 7671 chapter 13.

UK regulation reference

Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 SI 1989/635

Regulation 14 — the live-working test that drives the entire method statement.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1989/635/contents/made>

HSE GS38 — Electrical test equipment for use on low voltage electrical systems HSE GS38

The reference for test instrument specification and the safe isolation sequence.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/g38.htm>

BS 7671 — Requirements for Electrical Installations (IET Wiring Regulations, 18th Edition Amendment 2) BS 7671:2018+A2:2022

The technical standard for the installation — chapter 13 covers fundamental principles including isolation.

<https://electrical.theiet.org/bs-7671/>

HSR25 — Memorandum of guidance on the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 HSE HSR25

HSE's interpretive guidance on the EAWR — the document reviewers cite for live-working justification.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsr25.htm>

Frequently asked questions

Do I need a method statement for routine fault-finding on a live circuit?

Yes if any part of the work is on or near a live conductor. The method statement justifies the live-working decision against EAWR regulation 14 (the three-part test) and describes the additional precautions — insulated tools, voltage-rated PPE, restricted access. Most JIB contractors treat any live testing above touch voltage as requiring a documented method.

Is a single padlock on the isolator enough?

Only if one person is working on the circuit. Where multiple contractors are working, a multi-lock hasp is required so each contractor applies their own personal lock and removes it only when they have personally finished. Shared or supervisor-controlled locks do not satisfy EAWR.

What does GS38-compliant test equipment mean?

HSE GS38 specifies the safety features required of voltage indicators and test leads: finger barriers to prevent contact with metal parts, fused leads to limit fault current, and exposed metal tips of no more than 4 mm. Multimeters and indicators that don't meet these criteria are not acceptable for safe isolation work.

Why is 'proving the prover' important?

The test sequence is: prove the voltage indicator works on a known-live source → test the circuit dead → re-prove the voltage indicator on the known-live source. The re-prove step catches the case where the indicator failed during the dead-test, which would otherwise give a false 'dead' reading. The HSE has investigated fatalities where this step was omitted.

Who can sign off an electrical isolation method statement?

A competent person — typically a JIB-graded electrician or higher with documented training in safe isolation. BS 7671 chapter 14 requires that work is carried out by a 'skilled person' (electrically) and method statements are

typically authored by an Approved Electrician or above on commercial sites.

Need a finished version of this document?

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