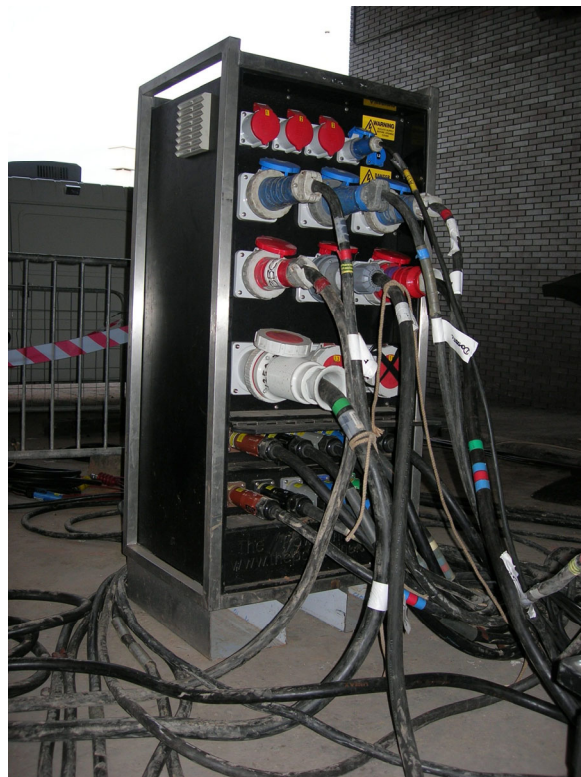


Electrical Safety at Events



An introduction to the requirements and what to expect from contractors deploying temporary electrical systems

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Temporary electrical systems in the events and entertainment industry

Electricity is powerful and often the cause of fires, injuries and even death. At events the risks associated with electricity are greater because of the temporary nature of the distribution system. A lack of adequate mechanical protection, varying demands, unpredictable weather and unusual loads all can affect the effectiveness of protection methods used.

This document outlines the background, methods and need to ensure electrical safety at events. It is a short briefing guide aimed at event managers, local authorities and the like.

The law

All employers have a legal duty to ensure that working environments are electrically safe (Electricity at Work Regulations 1989; 'EaWR'). They also have a duty to ensure that the equipment used in the workplace is electrically safe as well (Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998, 'PUWER').

In essence, PUWER requires us to inspect work equipment regularly to make sure it is safe to use, and this is where the concept of 'portable appliance testing' (more colloquially known as 'PAT Testing') stems from.

The EaWR is concerned with the electrical system as a whole, which includes the distribution cables and boxes as well as the equipment connected to it. It requires the system to be designed and installed by competent people and for it to protect against the hazards that electricity can create.

Complying with the law

British Standard BS 7671 is the principle guide to electrical safety in the UK. It is better known as the IET Wiring Regulations, currently in its 18th edition (and often referred to as such). The Health and Safety Executive holds BS 7671 in high regard, to the extent that it has written an endorsement in the introduction which states that installations that comply with BS 7671 are likely to enable the requirements of the EaWR to be met.

BS 7671 does invoke the use of other standards which may have to be used alongside it. In this context the most relevant is BS 7909 which is a guide for temporary power systems at events. So to comply with the IET Wiring Regulations at an event, BS 7909 has to be complied with too. By inference both standards are therefore required to enable compliance with the EaWR. Both are also listed in the Memorandum of Guidance on the EaWR published by the HSE.

BS 7909 deals specifically with the setting up, management and some related technical issues for the temporary electrical systems used at events. Events usually include (but not exclusively) festivals, location filming, agricultural shows, TV OBs, theatre, sporting events, pageants and so on.

What is a temporary electrical system?

Although BS 7671 is concerned with 'electrical installations' it calls any assembly of electrical equipment an 'installation', whether temporary or permanent. If it is temporary, it is designed for a particular purpose and will be removed when no longer required for that purpose. That purpose may be a one-off gig, a film shoot, a winter ice-rink or a summer festival. There is no defined period of how long *temporary* may be. It's better to consider it as not being *permanent*.

Equally it is important to note that BS 7909 applies to systems of a 'plug'n'play' nature, where all the distribution equipment and cables are ready made and the whole system can (largely) be assembled without the use of tools. If it is being manufactured from scratch then BS 7671 only applies, but most event companies only use pre-assembled and tested stock distribution equipment so BS 7909 would more often than not apply. Also note that BS 7671 has particular requirements for fairgrounds and exhibitions which are not covered by BS 7909 specifically.

So it doesn't matter whether the power comes from a generator or a building, the event is indoors, outdoors or in a marquee. If the intention is to remove it at some point, it's temporary.

Tell me about BS 7909 in a nutshell.

Essentially it requires events to design their systems in accordance with the Wiring Regulations; i.e. to ensure systems work effectively and protect against the risks of shock and fire. A main focus is on management of the event and it tries to help contextualise the requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. It requires the event manager (which may be a promoter, event manager, producer, production manager etc) to appoint someone electrically competent to oversee the electrical system. Under BS 7909, this person is called the 'Senior Person Responsible' (SPR).

The standard also splits electrical distributions into two categories; 'small/simple' systems and 'large/complex'. The guideline is that anything under 6kVA (typically the same as 6kW worth of power, equivalent to around three kettles) is classed in the small/simple category.

The key to the application of the small/simple category is that it is simple and typically used within a building - the supply would usually be derived from the ordinary sockets on the wall. There won't be much equipment - examples may be small press conferences, indoor display stands or filmed interviews. It also allows for the SPR to be an instructed person who has been directed in the use of a simple plug-in tester, but who may not be electrically skilled. There are no requirements for completion documentation, but PAT records for equipment must be checked and the supply verified.

Anything else that doesn't fit into that classification is considered large/complex. That may include relatively small systems but which are run from a generator, or extension leads taken from a building to deliver power to an outdoor event. All of these situations require someone electrically skilled to assess the additional risks and put in suitable protection methods.

Large systems need a bit of planning and should be designed and tested. The testing need not be done on every circuit as the equipment has already been checked, the designer though needs to ensure that the protective measures will work effectively for the supplies used. Documents showing that the system has been designed and checked need to be completed (called 'completion certificates') and copies should be given to the person ordering the work as well as the property/venue owner if requested. Examples are given at the end of this document.

The testing needs to be completed before the system is handed over to the rest of an event crew for general use and the test results noted. The certification would normally be completed when everything is operational and the SPR has satisfied himself that the system is safe and works effectively.

Temporary systems need re-testing and re-certification (or amended certificates) when substantial changes in the distribution occur. Each event is different, but examples may be:

- New locations – each time a system is put together in a new location or venue;
- Significant additions of equipment; e.g. a new multiple channel dimmer and lighting circuits or a dining bus, rather than a couple of individual light fittings or an extension lead to power a kettle.
- Changes of supply – e.g. going from using a building or venue supply to a generator.
- Damage or interference to the equipment, including unforeseen environmental effects (flood, fire etc).

Note that the context should be considered in each case - consider a small film shoot using a few lights, associated distribution and a generator moving from location to location. If the same cabling, distribution, equipment and source of supply are used at each location, then the results will always be broadly the same. Accordingly some rudimentary checks at each subsequent location may suffice after the first full assessment.

BS 7909 also discusses earthing practices and procedures in some detail. Basically the mass of earth that you stand on is often (but *not always*) used as a safety measure by providing a route back to the power supply for fault currents, which in turn causes fuses or circuit breakers to operate when there is a problem. The earthing arrangements in a temporary system need careful consideration particularly where generators are used or cables are taken in/out of buildings.

If you see an earth 'spike' (normally a metal rod or tray) under the wheels of a generator or an earth cable connected to an item of street furniture such as lamppost or bus shelter, questions should be asked as these are indicators of ineffective or even potentially dangerous earthing practices.

What does BS 7909 mean to me as a property owner or local authority?

Well, it depends what the event is doing and where the event is hosted. The following are some situations that may be useful to consider.

1. If it's your property and your event, it's down to you to comply with the law relating to electrical safety, so you would need to appoint (or ensure your contractor appoints) an SPR.
2. If it's your property but not your event (you're effectively just renting the space out), you still have a duty to ensure your staff are working in a safe environment. If you have contractors or crews putting in temporary power systems you need to ensure that staff which may be affected are safe. Therefore you would want to seek assurance that the temporary electrical system(s) are safe and your employees are not at risk.
3. There may be property insurance requirements (especially in historic or other architecturally significant buildings) which require electrical installations to be checked regularly for safety. If an event comes in and creates an electrical fire, what proof would you have that you exercised reasonable care and diligence in that respect?
4. Equally if you are open to the public, you have a duty to exercise reasonable care for their safety and again there may also be insurance implications. So it would be prudent to ensure that the temporary electrical contractor is deploying a safe system where measures to protect against electric shock are effective.
5. If you are the local Authority licensing an event, the Licensing Act requires public safety to be taken into consideration as one of the four licensing objectives. Also the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has guidance issued under Section 182 of the licensing Act 2003 which requires temporary electrical systems to be safe and to comply with BS 7909 and 7671 (Annex 2 Part 2), available [here](#).

This is not exhaustive and not all might be relevant, but in practice you would probably need to ensure the temporary electrical system has been designed appropriately and tested more often than not.

It is important to realise that there is no liability taken on by requesting these certificates and it would not invalidate any indemnity held by the property owner to do so. No one would expect an electrically unskilled person to read the certificate and understand all the results given. The important aspect is that it has been requested and that someone has had to complete and sign the certificate indicating they've accepted responsibility for the temporary system.

Good contractors will not raise issue with this and will happily present the right documents which will (at a minimum) consist of a Completion Certificate and Schedule of test results. On larger events with more than one source of supply there will also be a 'Confirmation of electrical completion' which is a summary of all the individual Completion Certificates.

Why don't more people know about BS7909?

In the world of Standards BS 7909 is relatively new, the current version being issued in 2011 and its predecessor in 2008. The IET Wiring Regulations on the other hand date back to the late 1800's. It takes time for Standards to be widely understood and adopted but BS 7909 has in the last year or so been more widely specified.

Can I use our NICEIC contractor to do checks?

There are several 'Competent Person Scheme Operators' including the NIC EIC, ECA and NAPIT for example. All assess their members against the '[Electrotechnical Assessment Specification Document](#)' (EAS) and so all provide the same basic level of assurance as to the competence of electrical contractors.

However, these schemes assess contractors in their *normal work activities* and so unless your NICEIC registered contractor has been assessed doing temporary systems under BS 7909, they may be completely unaware of the requirements, which is more than likely. There are many examples of accredited contractors mis-applying the IET Wiring Regulations at temporary events or event venues because they don't understand some of the unusual demands of the equipment and systems, or even the requirements of BS 7909.

Using an accredited contractor could well prove useful and they may give helpful advice, but it is important to realise that their accreditation is unlikely to be for such work and so they may not give you valid assurance unless they have a good understanding of BS 7909. Also any warranty or bonds that cover them via the scheme may not be valid.

Bibliography

The IET Wiring Regulations 17th Edition

<http://electrical.theiet.org/books/regulations/17th-edition-amd1.cfm>

Electricity at work regulations 1989

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

Memorandum of guidance on the electricity at work regulations (HSR 25)

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

Provision and use of work equipment regulations 1998

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1998/2306/contents/made>

BS 7909 Code of practice for temporary electrical systems for entertainment and related purposes

<http://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=00000000030228298>

Sample electrical certificates with notes on completion

COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

(Form G1 for use with BS 7909, Code of practice for temporary electrical systems for entertainment and related purposes)

This Certificate, showing the results of inspections and tests carried out on the temporary distribution described, should be handed to the event manager. A copy should be available for the owner of the electrical supply which feeds the temporary system. One certificate should be prepared for each electrically separate temporary distribution. This document is not valid without a completed Schedule of Test Results.

Certificate Reference No: **AB1234**

Part 1: Description of the activity being covered and supply characteristics

1. Event: Electrical Witness drama	2. Location or venue: Old gasworks, W1 1AA
3. Does this certificate cover a subsection of a larger system? Y/N If yes, give details: Lighting system only	4. Supply: Single phase <input type="checkbox"/> Three-phase <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Max demand: <u>160</u> A or kVA (delete as appropriate)
5. Date of inspection and test: 1st January 2000	Distribution schematic attached? Y/N

Part 2: System details of supply used (One certificate for a system fed from each separate supply)

6. Source of supply used:	Generator at: Parked in Gas St.	Installed supply at: N/A
7. Supply earthing arrangements:	TN-S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TT <input type="checkbox"/> TN-C-S <input type="checkbox"/> IT (see BS 7909:2011, C.4.5) <input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Protective devices at source of supply:	CB/RCBO/fuse rating: <u>125</u> A Type: D Type MCB	RCD/RCBO I _{Δn} : <u>500</u> mA Time delay setting: <u>1000</u> ms
9. Additional earthing arrangements:	Are earth electrodes deployed? Y/N	Give details (including type & location): 2m spike driven in flower bed
10. Interconnection of earthing systems:	Have deliberate connections between the temporary distribution and any other system been made? Y/N	If yes, state interconnection details: Protective bond connected between generator and installed supply used for catering/production in building.
11. Protective devices in the ISU (if present):	CB/RCBO/fuse rating: <u>125</u> A Type: <u>D type MCB</u>	RCD/RCBO I _{Δn} : <u>N/A</u> mA Time delay setting: _____ ms

12. Final circuit details and tests should be shown on a Schedule of Test Results, where appropriate.

13. Specify any deviations from BS 7909 or the design, or other significant information:

Non H07-RNF cable used for some distribution cables. Extra protection against damage installed.

Part 3: Essential inspection and tests

14. Visual inspection satisfactory <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	15. Polarity throughout satisfactory <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
16. Earth fault loop Z throughout satisfactory <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	17. RCD 'T' buttons satisfactory <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
18. Evidence of formal inspection and test provided and satisfactory for electrical equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
19. Earth loop impedance of the supply, measured at the source of supply or ISU if present: <u>0.05</u> Ω	
20. Planned duration of this system: 2 days	21. Date to re-inspect & re-test this system: 4th January if running over

Part 4: Declaration

I certify that the temporary electrical distribution system described above has been set-up in accordance with the recommendations of BS 7909:2011 and inspection and testing has been completed. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the system is safe and suitable for the intended purpose.

Name: **Imar Lamphee**

Responsibility on event:
Gaffer/SPR

For and on behalf of: **Filament Rentals Ltd**

Signature: **Imar Lamphee**

Date: **1st January 2000**

IMPORTANT CLIENT INFORMATION

This safety certificate (Form G1) has been issued to confirm that the Temporary Electrical System (TES) to which it relates has been designed, constructed, inspected and tested in accordance with British Standard 7671 (the IET Wiring Regulations) and BS 7909 (the code of practice for temporary distributions at events). It must be accompanied by a Schedule of Test Results (Form G2). This certificate may be one of several for a large event which will be indicated by a 'Y' in box 3. In this case there should also be a 'Confirmation of Electrical Completion' document (Form G3) along with the other certificates for each sub-system, which will be listed on Form G3.

You should have received an "original" Certificate and the contractor should have retained a duplicate. If you were the person ordering the work, but not person who has overall responsibility for the event, you should pass this certificate, or a full copy of it including the schedules, immediately to the person with responsibility for the event.

The "original" Certificate should be retained in a safe place and be shown to any person who has due cause to inspect or undertake further work on the TES in the future, it may also be required in the event of an investigation occurring. The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations require that, for a project covered by those Regulations, a copy of this Certificate, together with schedules, is included in the project health and safety documentation.

For safety reasons, the TES may need to be inspected at appropriate intervals by a competent person. The maximum time interval recommended before the next inspection is stated on Page 1 under "21. Date to re-inspect & re-test this system".

NOTES FOR THE PERSON COMPLETING THIS FORM

A Completion Certificate, supported by a Schedule of Test Results, should be produced for each new temporary system set-up, or when the system is altered significantly (BS 7909 G.3.7). As a minimum there should be a Completion Certificate for temporary systems connected to each separate source of supply. Where an event is extensive or complex enough to require more than one Completion Certificate, a Confirmation of Electrical Completion should be provided by the senior person responsible to indicate that the temporary electrical system has been set-up, inspected, tested and is safe and suitable for use at the event (BS 7909 Figure G.3).

Note that Completion Certificates, Schedules of Test Results and Confirmation of Electrical Completion can be produced as paper or electronic documents.

Guidance on filling in a Completion Certificate

Part 1:

Enter details as required. If box 3 is 'Yes', a confirmation of electrical completion is also required. The 'Reference No' field must have a unique reference number in it and this must also appear on Form G2 – Schedule of Test Results.

Part 2

In box 6 enter the supply details as requested. In box 7 enter the earthing arrangements of the supply as confirmed.

Box 8: Enter the details of the overcurrent protection at the source of supply for the temporary distribution covered by this certificate. This may be the source of supply (e.g. generator) or an ISU in a larger distribution. If an RCD is also fitted, enter the details of the RCD.

In box 9 enter information about any additional earth electrodes that might have been deployed, such as at a generator, or a mobile or transportable unit, etc. Enter details such as where the electrode is deployed, connected and its impedance to the general mass of Earth. In box 10 enter details of any deliberate connections of the CPC to the CPCs of other electrical systems indicating which other electrical systems have been interconnected. For more information, see BS 7909 Annex C and Annex D.

In box 11 enter details of overcurrent protection and RCD (if fitted) at the ISU if present. If the source of supply is another ISU in part of a larger distribution then leave blank. The ISU is typically the first point of control of a supply to a temporary distribution that is definitely under the control of the person responsible.

Box 12 requires that the test details of the final circuits tested have been entered on the Schedule of Test Results applicable to this temporary distribution or section of the temporary distribution. The applicable Schedule of Test Results should be included with the Completion Certificate. Box 13 is for information about any deviations from the requirements of BS 7909 or from the design. Tick boxes 14-18 to confirm all relevant tests have been carried out, the results are acceptable and have been entered on the applicable Schedule of Test Results.

In box 19 the earth fault loop impedance is the value measured at the source of supply, i.e., ISU, generator or distribution unit, this effectively being the control position for the temporary distribution or section being considered

In boxes 20 and 21 enter the planned duration that this temporary electrical system is due to exist. If the temporary electrical system is planned to exist for a long period and has an intended date for periodic re-inspection and retest, this date should be entered at 21.

Schedule of Test Results

(Form G2 for use with BS 7908, Code of practice for temporary electrical systems for entertainment and related purposes)

This schedule has to be accompanied by a valid Completion Certificate.

SCHEDULE OF TEST RESULTS		Completion Certificate ref: AB1234									Page: 1 of 1	Date: 1st January 2000
Schedule of circuits tested		Protective devices				Conducted tests					Comments	
		Fuse or CB	RCD details									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Circuit details	Final circuit	Type/Rating (A)	Fixed/Adjustable F or A	Adjustable delay (ms)	Residual rating I _n (mA)	RCD test method (M or T)	Polarity	Phase sequence	Earth fault loop impedance Z _e	Prospective short circuit current (PSCC)		
	✓						✓	✓	Ω	kA		
Main three phase distribution circuit to lighting gantry	-	63	A	250	300	M	✓	✓	0.2	1.2	Fuse type BS 88 System 6	
Crew kettle in control position	✓	C16	F	-	30	T	✓	-	0.35	0.6		
Follow spot	✓	B16	F	-	30	T	✓	-	1.2	0.2		
Festoon lighting	✓	B16	F	-	30	T	✓	-	1.0	0.23	Cable in PVC not rubber. Safely positioned against damage	
TEST INSTRUMENT DETAILS: Give details of make, model and serial number of Instrument(s) used. If a combined instrument, tick here <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> and enter once below.												
Earth fault loop Impedance (or combined unit details): Make: Fluke; Model: ALLINI; Serial: ALPEN324						Residual current tester:			Prospective short circuit current tester:			

Guidance on completing the Schedule of Test Results

a) **Schedule of Test Results heading**

Enter the reference number as stated on the accompanying Completion Certificate, the page number (and number of pages if more than one Schedule of Test Results) and the date the testing was conducted.

b) **Circuit details**

Enter the description of the circuit (column 1) as noted on the circuit diagram or schematic of the design, including stating whether it is a single or three phase circuit. Tick the box (column 2) if it is a final circuit, or leave blank if it is a distribution circuit.

c) **Protective devices**

Enter the details for the protective devices at the source of the circuit. For fuses/circuit breakers, state what type and current rating (column 3). If the device is a fuse, enter the type under comments (column 12).

For RCDs, state whether the device is fixed or adjustable by entering F or A in column 4. In the columns for delay (column 5) and trip current (column 6):

Either:

enter the values that have been set (for an adjustable type) or enter only the $I_{\Delta n}$ value for a fixed rated device. Check the operation using the T button and enter "T" into column 7

Or:

measure the operating time and operating current and enter these values in columns 5 and 6. In this instance enter "M" into column 7.

d) **Polarity**

Tick the box once polarity has been verified (column 8).

e) **Phase sequence**

Indicate the result of phase sequence (rotation) test, where required (column 9) or insert 'N/A' if not applicable.

f) **Earth fault loop impedance and PSCC**

Enter the measured values of earth fault loop impedance and prospective short-circuit current (PSCC) (columns 10 and 11).

g) **Comments**

In column 12 give additional information, such as, details of circuits vulnerable to testing, fuse type from column 3, environmental hazards or other observations on the operation of the system. Any deviations should be detailed along with the risk management strategy. Also include details of circuits that might need re-checking or managing for any other reason.

Confirmation of Electrical Completion

(Form G3 for use with BS 7909, Code of practice for temporary electrical systems for entertainment and related purposes)

This Certificate summarises the individual completion certificates for each subsection of the temporary distribution described. It confirms that the temporary electrical system and its sub-systems associated with the event detailed below have been set-up, inspected and tested appropriately to ensure that they are safe and suitable for use. This form should be handed to the event manager. A copy should be available for the owner of the electrical supply which feeds the temporary system. It should be accompanied by the number of Completion Certificates and Schedules of Test Results as stated in row 4.

Part 1: Details of event			
1 Event: Electrical Witness Drama			
2 Location or venue: The Old Gas Works, Gas St, W1 1AA			
3 Planned period of existence of the event: Start date: 1st January 2000 Planned removal date: 3rd January 2000			
4 Number of Certificates attached: 3			
Part 2: Schedule of sections			
Sub-system	Person Responsible	Organization	Certificate reference
Lighting Circuits	Imar Lamphce	Filament Rentals Ltd	AB1234
Dining & Catering	Ubie Luckie	Nibbles & Knobbles	F15HY
Scanner	Dart Angion	OBV Ltd	OB1K1NOB1E
Part 3: Confirmation			
<i>As the Senior Person Responsible, I confirm that the temporary electrical systems, as outlined in the schedule above, are safe and suitable for the purposes required by this event.</i>			
Signed: <u> Big John </u>			
For & on behalf of: <u> ArcEye.com </u>			
Print name: <u> Big John </u>			
Date: <u> 1st January 2000 </u>			
Distribution: <i>SPR to retain a copy.</i> <i>Copy to be provided to Event Manager for retention.</i> Other: <u> British Gas - site landlord </u>			

IMPORTANT CLIENT INFORMATION

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You should have received an "original" Certificate and the contractor should have retained a duplicate. If you were the person ordering the work, but not person who has overall responsibility for the event, you should pass this certificate, or a full copy of it including the schedules, immediately to the person with responsibility for the event.

The "original" Certificate should be retained in a safe place and be shown to any person who has due cause to inspect or undertake further work on the TES in the future, it may also be required in the event of an investigation occurring. The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations require that, for a project covered by those Regulations, a copy of this Certificate, together with schedules, is included in the project health and safety documentation.

NOTES FOR THE PERSON COMPLETING THIS FORM

A Completion Certificate, supported by a Schedule of Test Results, should be produced for each new temporary system set-up, or when the system is altered significantly (BS 7909 G.3.7). As a minimum there should be a Completion Certificate for temporary systems connected to each separate source of supply. Where an event is extensive or complex enough to require more than one Completion Certificate, this Confirmation of Electrical Completion should be provided by the senior person responsible to indicate that the temporary electrical system has been set-up, inspected, tested and is safe and suitable for use at the event (BS 7909 Figure G.3).

Completion Certificates, Schedules of Test Results and Confirmation of Electrical Completion can be produced as paper or electronic documents.

It is possible that a single source of supply might have several temporary distributions connected to it, for instance a source might be connected to an ISU that in turn supplies three entirely different temporary distributions each of significant complexity. In this case the design might require, or the person responsible might decide, that each distribution from the ISU warrants a separate Completion Certificate, with a further Completion Certificate that deals with the part of the temporary distribution from the source to the ISU.

Guidance on filling in a Confirmation of Electrical Completion

- a) **Part 1**
(1 to 4): Enter details of the event as appropriate.

- b) **Part 2**
This allows a row for each section of a temporary system or sub-system. Under the column "sub-system", enter the name of the section covered by the corresponding Completion Certificate. Enter the name of the Person Responsible in the next column, and where appropriate enter the organization assembling this section. Provided this sub-system is safe and suitable, enter the Completion Certificate reference number in the final column.

- c) **Part 3**
This is where the safety and suitability of the temporary electrical system is formally confirmed. The Senior Person Responsible signs the confirmation and ensures that the appropriate distribution of documents is carried out.