

9. Electricity & Lighting



electricity & lighting

Virtually all events need electricity and lighting. However, it is critically important that this is properly installed by someone who knows what they are doing and has appropriate experience to understand the sometimes unique requirements of events.

Remember, electricity can cause death or serious injury to people or livestock if the installation is faulty or not properly managed.

No matter the size of event, all electrical installations and equipment must comply with the general requirements of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 and only competent persons should carry out electrical installation work. There are also a number of guidelines on electrical installations, including the supply of temporary electrical systems for entertainment and related purposes.

Event organisers need to take this into account and make sure the contractor they appoint to provide electricity and lighting has the appropriate qualifications and experience. They should also undertake to comply with the requirements of BS7909.

All electrical systems used at any event should reach the standards of BS7909. A copy of the guidance can be obtained from the BSI (shop.bsigroup.com (<http://shop.bsigroup.com/en/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030228298>)). Alternatively, advice can be obtained from any reputable power company with experience of providing event power.

As electrical equipment may come onto the site from a variety of sources (e.g. via PA suppliers, traders etc.) all those bringing equipment to the event should be required to provide a current PAT (or equivalent) test certificate for it and to operate it in a safe way.

All 16A and 13A sockets supplying any equipment outdoors must have 30mA RCD protection. This rule also applies to any 32Amp sockets that may be required by food vendors and other traders.

Planning

In planning the installation the contractor will need to take a number of factors into consideration, including:

- the overall power requirements for the event including those for performance areas, caterers, traders, public areas and access routes;
- access to and details of any mains (utility) power supply available locally;
- consideration should be given to lighting for access and egress of both staff and visitors at events which are taking place at dusk or after darkness;
- emergency lighting will be also be required for events that take place during the hours of darkness;
- environmental conditions, particularly for outdoor events where weather protection may be needed;

- the safe laying of cables to avoid hazards or mechanical damage;
- safe unloading and loading of generators and associated equipment;
- a safe area, a way from the public, where electrical intakes and/or generators can be located;
- all generators should be contained in fenced off compounds and located away from combustible items or structures;
- suitable access should be provided for the refueling and access to generators by engineers;
- a risk assessment and hazard/spill plan should be drawn up for refueling of generators;