WHAT SAFE ISOLATION IS, AND THE KIT

IS SWITCHING OFF THE MAIN SWITCH SAFE ISOLATION?

§ **Safe isolation** means establishing that while you're working, **you cannot be harmed** — nobody can come past and re-energise the installation you're on, and they're kept out of the way by more than one means.

✋ **It is not just "turn the supply off".** Not pulling the supplier's cut-out fuse, not just flicking the main switch. There is a **procedure**, and it has a lot of steps. **Best Practice Guide 2** from Electrical Safety First sets the whole thing out — the kit, the standards, the voltages, what's allowed. It's a free download and it's worth having.

Before anything else: the **barrier** you put up. What kind of protection is that? **Basic protection** — stopping you coming into contact with a live part in the first place. The consumer unit's own cover is basic protection too, for you and for everyone else when you're not there.

WHAT'S IN THE KIT

ITEM	WHAT IT'S FOR
Approved voltage indicator (AVI) A **two-pole tester**	Proving dead. An approved voltage indicator to **BS EN 61243-3**; **GS38** covers its leads and probes
Proving unit	A known source to prove the AVI works, before and after
Padlock and key	Locking off. **The key stays in your pocket**, on you, at all times
Lock-off devices	Clip into an MCB to hold it off — plastic push-fit or brass with a small screw. The hole takes your padlock
Multi-lock hasp	On a big site with several trades. It **does not come off until the last lock is removed**
Warning signs and barriers	So people can see it's locked out and they're not to switch it on

✋ **The single-pole tester is not for proving dead.** A "fault stick" — a single-pole tester — is genuinely useful: an **open PEN fault** on a TN-C-S system is exactly what it's for. But it does not prove a circuit dead. Neither does a test screwdriver.

WHAT GS38 ACTUALLY ASKS OF THE LEADS

Flexible leads	In good condition — no nicks, cuts, splices; not stiff; nothing missing. Length doesn't matter, flexibility does
Exposed probe tip	**No more than 4 mm** exposed — **2 mm or less preferred**
Spring-loaded probes	Preferred — the shroud pushes back as you press into a terminal
Finger guards	Must be in place. Missing or cracked, don't use them
Test lamps	Must light. If they don't, there's a problem with the tester

One habit to avoid.

Don't loop the lead behind your neck to keep it out of the way. Just keep it clear of what you're doing.

- **Electrician's Guide · Section 7 · 7.5** · safe isolation procedure ★
- **HSE GS38** · leads, tips, guards ★
- **Best Practice Guide 2** · Electrical Safety First · free download

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