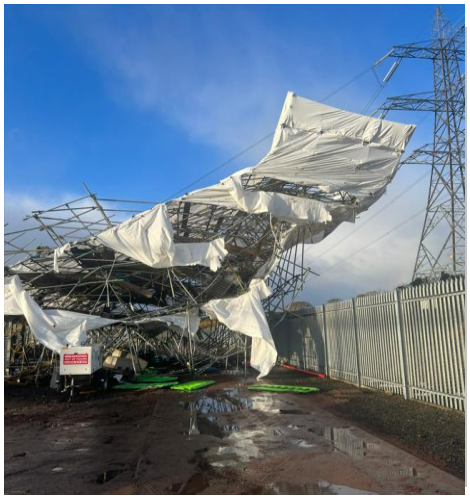
SP Energy Networks

Scaffold Collapse during Storm Bran

On Tuesday 9th December at approximately 16:30 at Coalburn 400kV substation, an independent cable sealing end scaffold collapsed as a result of high winds during Storm Bran.

Throughout the day, the scaffold and associated sheeting were continually assessed. Due to increased storm conditions, the contractor responsible for the works retreated from the scaffolding on safety grounds. Subsequently, the 16 metre high scaffolding lifted and tilted approximately to a 45º angle wrapping itself around the cable sealing end steel structures.

An investigation is underway to determine root causes, corrective actions and lessons learned.



Scaffold collapse

Tilted scaffold at 45º angle

Recommendations and action points

- **Setting to work** – All works should be planned, managed and coordinated in line with SP Energy Networks Setting to Work procedure (internal only).
- **Risk assessment and method statement (RAMS)** – Ensure thorough RAMS are in place to identify hazards and note the correct sequence of works.
- **Competent personnel** – Scaffolds must be designed, erected, altered and dismantled only by trained and competent workers under supervision.
- **Design and planning** – Complex scaffolds often require bespoke design to meet site-specific needs.
- **Complex design** – Ensure associated design checks and verification is carried out.
- **Inspection and maintenance** – Scaffolds should be inspected before use, after alterations, and at regular intervals (every 7 days).
- **Safe access and egress** – Provide ladders, stair towers and other safe means of access.
- **Weather considerations** – High winds, rain or ice can compromise scaffold safety. Works should be suspended in unsafe conditions.
- **Communication and training** – Operatives must be briefed on scaffold safety rules, emergency procedures and site-specific risks.
- **Compliance with Regulations** – Follow British Standards such as BS 5975-1/5975-2:2024 and NASC guidance to ensure legal compliance.