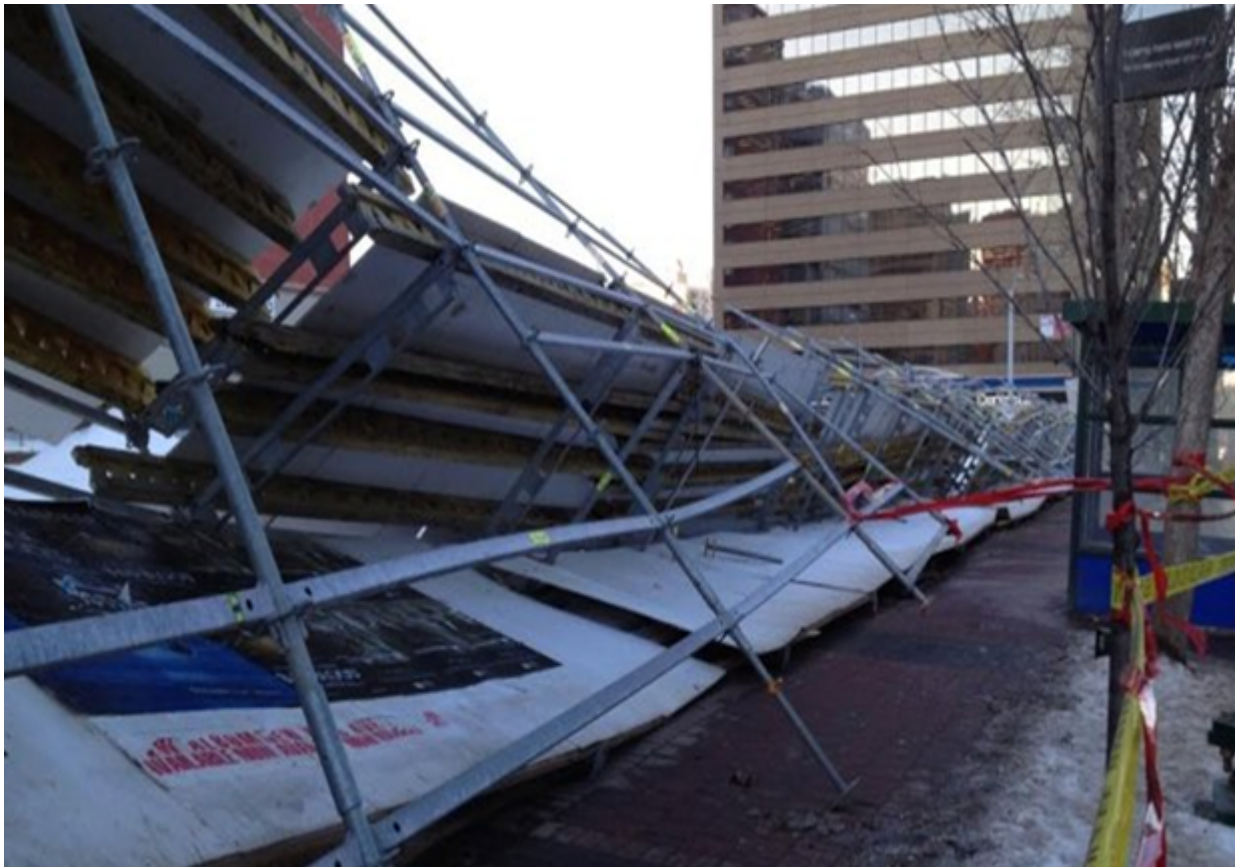


Spot The Safety Violation: Wind + Scaffolding = Safety Hazard



What could've been done to prevent this scaffolding from collapsing?



Weather conditions can make otherwise safe worksites unsafe. For example, extreme heat and cold can put workers' health at risk. And high winds can blow around tools and materials'and even cause equipment and structures to collapse.

For example, this picture from CBC News depicts the result of wind gusts exceeding 120 kilometers per hour: scaffolding crashed down at a construction site in Edmonton, AB. Fortunately, no workers or members of the public were injured.

But similar incidents haven't had such fortunate endings. For instance, a student at Notre Dame filming a football practice from a scissor lift was killed after the lift was toppled by strong winds.

Workers shouldn't work on scaffolding in high winds or during storms. But the scaffolding itself also needs to be secured properly so that it doesn't collapse and endanger workers on the ground or passers-by. It must be designed, built, trussed and maintained so as to withstand gusts of wind and support the loads and limitations to which it's subject. And note that having canvas sheets, tarps, etc. fixed to the scaffold significantly affects how it reacts in gusts of wind because they essentially act as sails.

In addition, the wind can lift materials and tools from the scaffold if they aren't properly secured. So take steps to tie down or otherwise secure the platforms and other items on scaffolds.

And make sure to comply with the specific requirements for scaffolding in your jurisdiction's OHS laws. For example, depending on the wind conditions, the OHS regulations may require you to have a professional engineer certify the scaffold as adequate.

In addition, here are 10 basic scaffolding safety tips:

1. Scaffold erection and dismantling must be done or supervised by qualified workers. And all scaffolds must be inspected before use by a competent person as well as those who will use them, regardless of who erected them.
2. Damaged or weakened scaffolds shouldn't be used until they've been effectively repaired.
3. The vertical supports of scaffolds must be placed on a firm base or sill.
4. The scaffold must be capable of supporting at least four times the load that will be imposed on it, including workers, tools and materials.
5. Scaffolds should have toe boards to prevent tools and materials from falling off them.
6. The scaffold supports must be properly braced.
7. Don't use pallets, boxes, concrete blocks, bricks or other unstable materials to support scaffolds.
8. The wheels of rolling scaffolds must have locking devices or blocks to prevent movement.
9. Scaffolds should have guardrails if workers are at risk of falling three metres or more or workers using the scaffold must wear appropriate fall protection.
10. Keep scaffolds—especially those made of metal—away from power lines.