

Safety Alert 25-19 - Damage to Marquee Due to High Winds

Incident summary

damaged a marquee hired to protect HV drums from adverse weather. As a result, one of the ratchet straps securing the marquee snapped, causing the counterweights to lift and the marquee to overturn.

The marquee was set up by an external company two days earlier, with a Permit to Load issued.

MWH sent out a weather warning on the Friday before, advising of winds up to 90mph and suggesting checks on temporary structures.

The wind speeds in the London area were lower than the marquee supplier's recommended limit of 63mph, so no further action was taken.

The cause of the incident was the ratchet strap failure. The investigation found that, although the weather event was unusual, the weather warning wasn't fully assessed on-site as a risk, especially for the marquee. This led to the lack of extra safety measures to handle the weather conditions.



Key Lessons Learned

- 1. Improve Risk Assessment when events such as adverse weather warnings are put in place** - Weather warnings must be treated as significant and worst-case site-specific controls put in place to account for any potential consequences. This includes making any temporary structures safe and secure- this may sometimes mean going back to the supplier of temporary structures for further guidance on how to enhance the security/strength of the temporary structure.
- 2. Verification of Compliance** – there is a need to ensure that when communications are sent out with important immediate actions required, that action is taken on this with no assumptions made that the site is not applicable, i.e. verifying that all sites took appropriate action during the adverse weather event.
- 3. Make sure that the equipment used is suitable for the job and check manufacturer instructions**
- 4. Consider 'gusts', which are often stronger than standard 'winds' when accounting for wind speeds and the effects on temporary structures** - When deciding if the structure could withstand the wind speed, the gusts of wind was not accounted for which are often much higher than general wind speeds.
- 5. Further Recommended Actions:**

- **Consider amendments to the Temporary Works:** if possible, the temporary works should always be taken down where feasible. If this is not possible, then follow manufacturers advice. For this incident, it could have included removing the sides of the marquee, further anchoring the marquee to the ground with stakes or weights, adding sandbags to the base for extra weight, adding wind breaks in around the marquee or looking at hanging the marquee from a sturdy permanent frame or beam.
- **Provide Training and Awareness:** Site teams to be upskilled via Weather Warning Awareness Session including, updating risk of assessments and making the site ready for the event, with case studies of previous lessons learnt and the consequences of non-compliance with relevant procedures.

REMEMBER - If in doubt, always contact the Installation Provider for further support and guidance

