

Silo collapse results in load shedding across SA

By [More Matshediso](#)

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Power utility Eskom said there'd be load shedding across South Africa from this Sunday. Wednesday evening and the whole of Thursday are marked as high risk for power cuts.

This after one of the three silos, which housed over 10,000t of coal each, cracked and later collapsed at Majuba power station on Saturday, impacting coal supplies to six units.



The collapsed silo. (Image: Eskom)

The Utility's Chief Executive Tshediso Matona on Sunday said no injuries were reported following the incident.

He said all units were running normally yesterday, prior to the silo collapse, but at approximately 12:30, one of the staff members at the station reported a visible crack on silo number 20.

He said the crack on the silo enabled personnel on the station site to be evacuated. The crack was later followed by a collapse.

"The area was immediately secured and protected," he said.

Matona said the station output was immediately affected and reduced from 3,600MW to 1,800MW and the situation worsened afterwards.

"We are now sitting at capacity output of 600MW," he added.

Investigations and inspections

Matona said Eskom engineers are investigating the cause of the incident and results will be communicated in due cause.

"The latest civil-visual inspection that was conducted in September 2013 found that the concrete structure was in good condition," he said.

He added that there was some external damage which was attended to and that risk classification at the time was classified as low.

The other two silos remaining at the power station would not be operational as they also undergo inspection.

"The cause and costs of the incident are yet to be investigated," he said.

He said the situation is being monitored constantly and the public will be updated on progress, both on the incident and contingency plans.

Contingency measures

"We do not think we will be able to recover all the capacity, but our aim is [over the next couple of days] to make sure that we recover as much lost capacity as possible," he said.



General view of the Majuba power station. (Image: Eskom)

He said the success thereof would depend on logistic arrangements to feed coal to the units.

Eskom said it would in the meantime make use of mobile coal feeders at the station, as one of interventions to recover lost capacity.

Meanwhile, the public is urged to switch off pool pumps, turn air-conditioning to 23°C and to switch off geysers and unnecessary lights to limit the impact of the load shedding.

He said Eskom would keep the public updated about any developments and information regarding load shedding.

The power cuts will rotate across the country, and the load shedding schedule is available at <http://loadshedding.eskom.co.za/> for Eskom customers.

Customers are urged to switch off pool pumps, turn air-conditioning to 23°C and to switch off geysers and unnecessary lights to limit the impact of the load shedding.

Eskom customers can contact our customer call centre on 0860 037 566. Municipal customers need to contact their own municipalities for their schedules.

Customers are cautioned to treat all electrical connections as live during this period.

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