

National avalanche bulletin no. 46

for Saturday, 20 December 2008

issue date 19.12.2008, 18:30 hours

Snowdrift accumulations present the major hazard

Current conditions

On Friday along the southern flank of the Alps, the sun was shining generally, amid moderate northerly winds. In the remaining regions it was heavily overcast and a bit of snow fell regionally. The amounts of new snow since Thursday morning have amounted to less than 10 cm. Moderate northwesterly winds have prevailed, at higher altitudes the winds were strong intermittently. At midday, the temperatures at 2000 m were minus 4 degrees in northern regions, zero degrees in southern regions.

At 2000 m on the southern flank of the Alps there is now 120 to 220 cm of snow, locally as much as 270 cm. On the northern flank of the Alps, in the Valais, in central Grisons and in the Upper Engadine, there is 80 to 120 cm. In northern Grisons and the Lower Engadine at 2000 m, there is 50 to 80 cm of snow. In the inneralpine regions there are still weak lower layers embedded in the snowpack in places. In intermediate and high altitude regions, the snowpack has been intensely subject to wind influences.

Short-term development

On Saturday it is expected to be predominantly sunny in southern regions. Primarily along the central and eastern sectors of the northern flank of the Alps and in northern Grisons, up to 10 cm of new snow is expected in the course of the day. In the remaining regions, hardly any snowfall is anticipated. Midday temperatures at 2000 m will be minus 4 degrees in northern regions and minus 1 degree in southern regions. Moderate northerly winds will prevail at intermediate altitudes and escalate significantly in strength with rising altitude, reaching strong to stormy wind speeds.

The newly fallen snow will be transported, particularly at high altitudes.

Avalanche danger forecast for Saturday

Northern flank of the Alps not including Prealps; in addition, Valais; northern Ticino; Grisons not including the regions of the Lower Engadine, lower Val Calanca and lower Val Moesa:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all aspects above approximately 2000 m. The freshly formed snowdrift accumulations are not deep; by and large they can be triggered by a single backcountry skier or freerider. Particularly in the inneralpine regions, avalanches can fracture down into the old snowpack. In outlying terrain away from secured ski runs, experience in the assessment of avalanche hazards, and particularly in critically assessing snowdrift accumulations, is imperative.

Prealps; Lower Engadine; central Ticino; Sotto Ceneri; lower Val Calanca and lower Val Moesa:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all aspects above approximately 1800 m. Prudent route selection is important. Snowdrift accumulations should be avoided whenever possible.

Along the southern flank of the Alps and in the bordering regions with lots of snow in particular, full depth snowslides continue to be expected.

Trend for Sunday and Monday

On Sunday it will be sunny in southern regions. Particularly in eastern regions and in Grisons, some additional snowfall is anticipated. The expected amounts of new snow are uncertain. In the remaining regions, increasing sunshine is expected. On Monday it will be sunny in all regions and rather mild temperatures for the season will prevail. The avalanche danger may increase in eastern regions and in Grisons. In the Lower Engadine, Level 3 - considerable danger - may be reached. In southern regions, the hazards will continue to recede.

National avalanche bulletin as an MMS (Fr. 0.50/MMS)

Send an SMS with the corresponding key word to the speed dial number 162.

LAWINE overview of the keywords
LAWCHD national avalanche bulletin (german)

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Regional avalanche bulletins (Fr. 0.50/MMS)

LAWZCH Central Switzerland
LAWBVS Lower Valais / VD
LAWOVS Upper Valais
LAWNGR North and Central Grisons
LAWSGR South Grisons
LAWBEO Bernese Oberland
LAWEAN Eastern Part of the Northern Slope of the Alps

Internet: <http://www.slf.ch>

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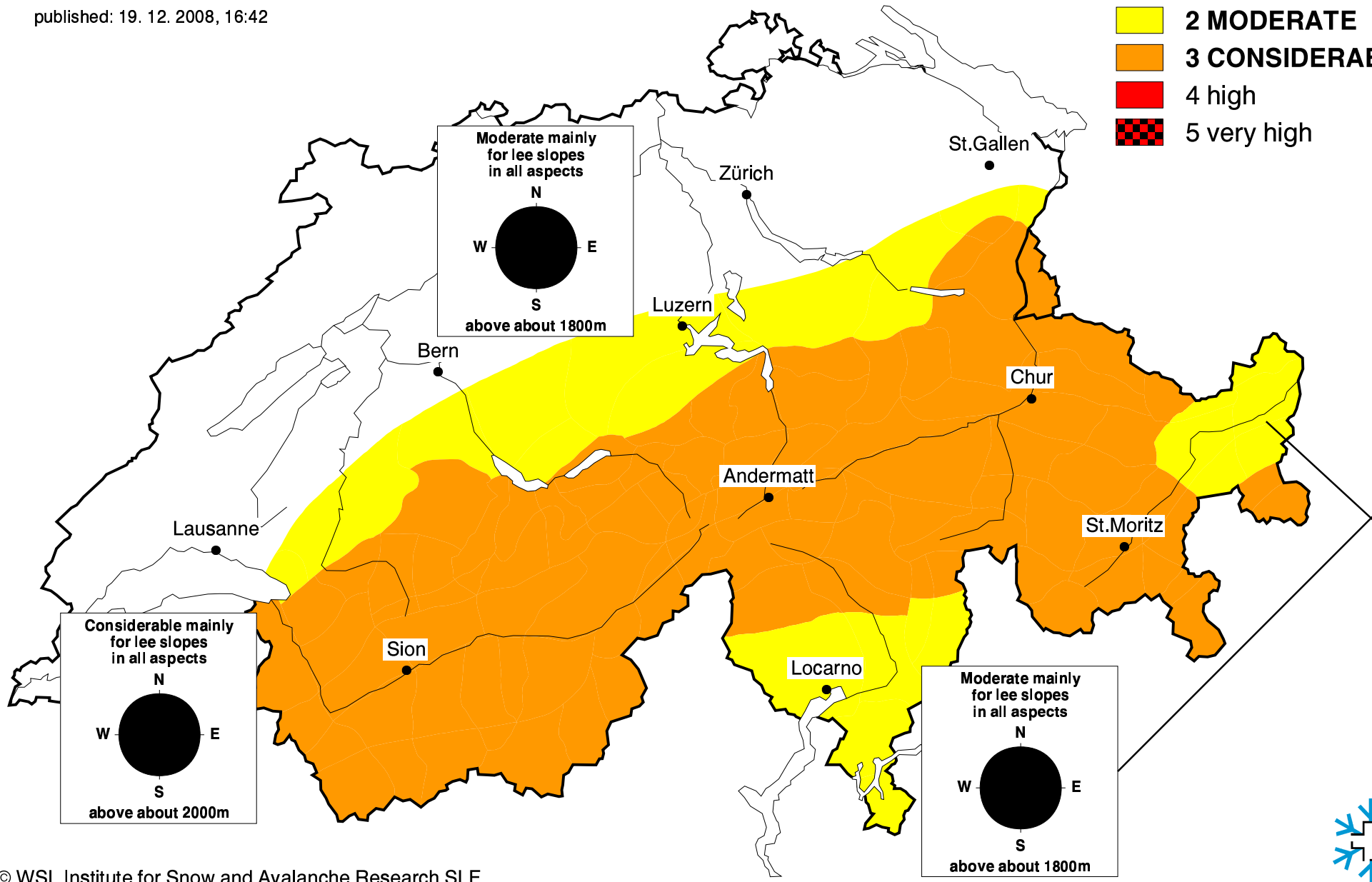
Avalanche danger forecast

for Saturday, 20. December 2008

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Danger level

-  1 low
-  **2 MODERATE**
-  **3 CONSIDERABLE**
-  4 high
-  5 very high








Avalanche danger forecast

for Saturday, 20. December 2008

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Danger level

-  1 low
-  **2 MODERATE**
-  **3 CONSIDERABLE**
-  4 high
-  5 very high

