

National avalanche bulletin no. 81

for Saturday, 24 January 2009

issue date 23.1.2009, 18:30 hours

Avalanche danger in far western regions is high, elsewhere considerable

Current conditions

On Friday it was overcast and precipitation set in from the west. The snowfall level was between 800 and 1600 m. In the Valais it snowed down to the valley. By evening in the Lower Valais, in northern Valais, in Goms and in the Jura region, there was 20 to 40 cm of new snow. In the remaining Valais and on the northern flank of the Alps, there was 10 to 20 cm, in Grisons and in the Ticino, less. Strong to stormy southwesterly winds prevailed along the northern flank of the Alps and in Grisons, elsewhere the winds were moderate. The midday temperature at 2000 m was zero degrees in northern regions and minus 7 degrees in southern regions.

In all regions, large sized snowdrift accumulations have formed far and wide. Particularly in wind protected and shady areas, this snowdrift is deposited atop loosely packed, faceted old snow. Primarily in the inneralpine regions of the Valais and Grisons as well as in areas near the treeline in general, the snowpack in places is loosely packed down to the ground and avalanches can fracture down to the lowermost layers. Natural avalanches in western regions in particular are indicators of an extremely treacherous situation.

Short-term development

During the night on Friday, the precipitation will slacken off. Winds will shift to northwesterly. Along the southern flank of the Alps, strong northerly winds will arise temporarily. In the latter half of the night, the winds will taper off everywhere. During the day on Saturday there will be renewed precipitation from the southwest. In the Lower Valais, 10 to 20 cm of snowfall is expected, elsewhere 5 to 10 cm. The snowfall level will be 300 to 800 m. The midday temperature at 2000 m will be minus 7 degrees. During the day, light to moderate southwesterly winds will prevail.

Especially in the course of Friday night, further snowdrift accumulations are expected to form. The avalanche situation will remain tense.

Avalanche danger forecast for Saturday

Regions Chablais; Trient; Champex; Great St. Bernard; Villars; Ovronnaz; Montana:

High avalanche danger (Level 4)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects above approximately 1800 m. Particularly Friday night, natural avalanches can still be expected. They will attain medium size, occasionally even large size, and are expected to endanger exposed parts of transportation routes. For backcountry skiers and freeriders, the situation in outlying terrain away from secured ski runs is highly critical.

Remaining regions of the Swiss Alps; Jura:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

In the indicated regions of the Alps not including central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects above approximately 1600 m. Natural avalanches are possible, particularly on Friday night. Exposed parts of transportation routes are at risk in isolated cases. Backcountry skiers and freeriders can easily trigger avalanches. Great experience in the assessment of avalanche hazards as well as general caution are imperative.

In central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on west to north to south facing steep slopes above approximately 1800 m. The freshly formed snowdrift should be assessed with great caution.

In the Jura region, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects above approximately 1400 m.

Along the northern flank of the Alps and in the Lower Valais, wet avalanches are possible below about 2000 m, particularly during Friday night. In all regions, increasingly frequent full depth snowslides can again be expected.

Trend for Sunday and Monday

On Sunday it is expected to be predominantly sunny. On Monday it will be variable and only a small amount of snowfall is anticipated. The frequency of natural avalanches will decrease. For backcountry skiers and freeriders, the situation will remain critical, particularly on Sunday.






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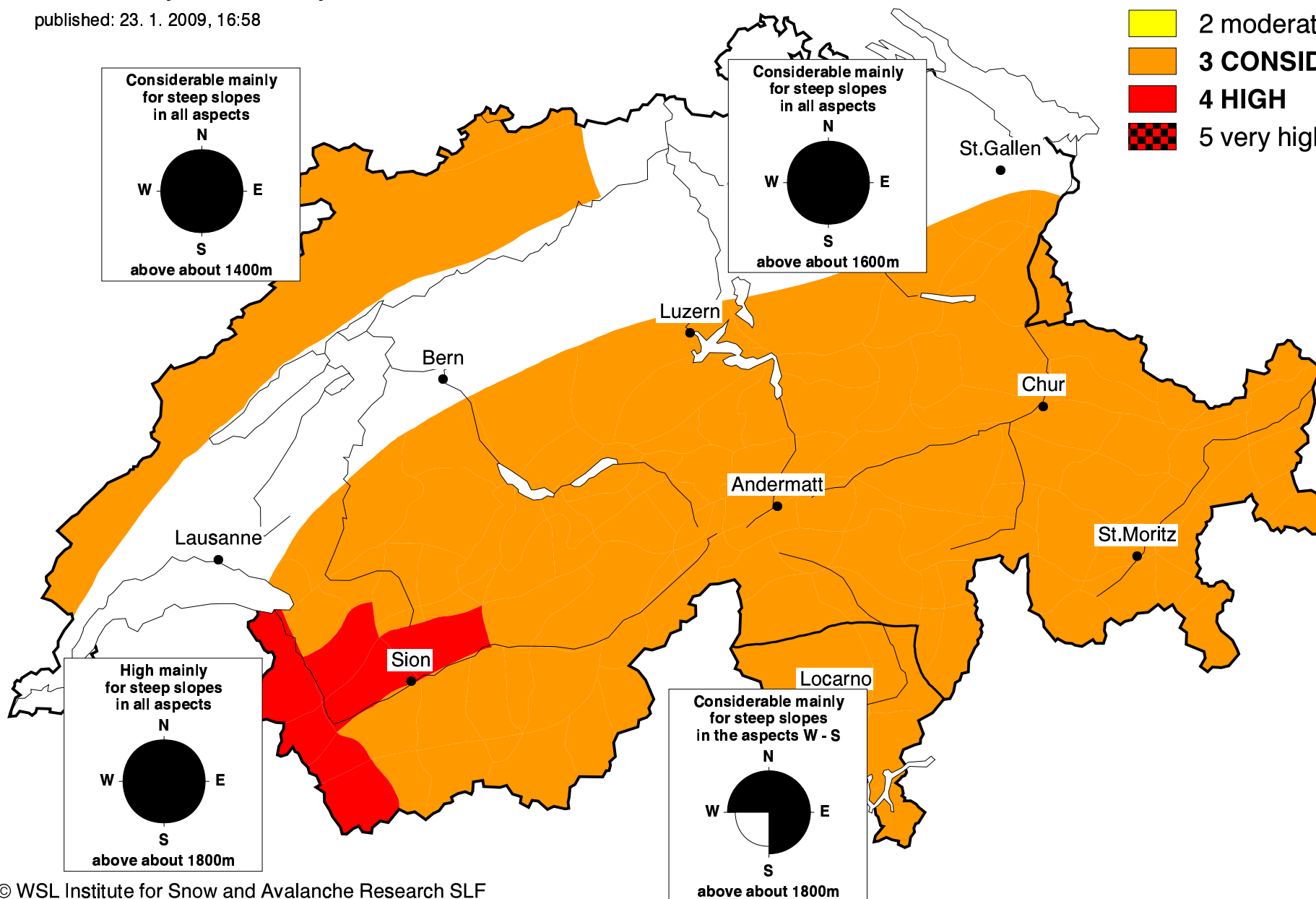
Avalanche danger forecast

for Saturday, 24. January 2009

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Danger level

-  1 low
-  2 moderate
-  3 **CONSIDERABLE**
-  4 **HIGH**
-  5 very high








Avalanche danger forecast

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Danger level

-  1 low
-  2 moderate
-  **3 CONSIDERABLE**
-  **4 HIGH**
-  5 very high

