

# National avalanche bulletin no. 109

for Saturday, 21 February 2009

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## *Considerable danger of avalanches widespread*

### Current conditions

On Friday in the western part of the northern flank of the Alps, in the Valais and in Ticino, it was sunny; in the remaining regions it was predominantly heavily overcast. In far eastern regions there was a few centimeters of new snow. The midday temperatures were between minus 7 degrees in eastern regions, minus 4 degrees in western regions and minus 2 degrees in southern regions. A moderate northerly wind was blowing to begin with, then slackened off to light.

The snow which fell on Tuesday has already settled considerably in the major areas of precipitation on the northern flank of the Alps and in northern Grisons. The bonding to the snow beneath it is improving apace. In the western part of the northern flank of the Alps and in the inneralpine parts of the Valais and Grisons in particular, there are weak layers embedded inside the snowpack which can fracture easily and lead to avalanches.

### Short-term development

On Saturday it is expected to be overcast on the northern flank of the Alps and in northern Grisons. In eastern regions approximately 10 cm of snowfall is anticipated; in western regions less. In the Valais and in southern regions it will be quite sunny. Snowfall will set in from the north in the Engadine in particular. The northerly winds will increase markedly in strength and be strong at high altitudes. The new fallen snow as well as the snowfall from the most recent period of precipitation can be transported in some places.

### Avalanche danger forecast for Saturday

Northern flank of the Alps; Valais; central part of Main Alpine Ridge; northern and central Grisons; Engadine; Münstertal:

#### *Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)*

In the western part of the northern flank of the Alps; in the Valais and in central Grisons, both excluding the regions on the Main Alpine Ridge, additionally in the following regions: Flims-Untervaz, Schanfigg, Davos region, Lower Engadine and Münstertal, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects above approximately 1800 m.

Avalanches can be triggered even by a single backcountry skier or freerider. Remote avalanche triggering is possible.

Often in such avalanches, not only the snow from the most recent period of precipitation is unleashed; layers far lower down in the snowpack can also be triggered, thus permitting the avalanches to attain medium size. In outlying terrain away from secured ski runs, experience in the assessment of the avalanche situation as well as cautious route selection are imperative.

In the central and eastern parts of the northern flank of the Alps, in Prättigau and on the Main Alpine Ridge from Great St. Bernard into Avers, as well as in the Upper Engadine, the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all aspects above approximately 2000 m. Freshly formed snowdrift accumulations in gullies and bowls or behind pronounced breaks in the terrain can be easily triggered: these form the major danger currently. They should be avoided through careful route selection. In addition, triggering avalanches down to the lowermost layers of the snowpack is also possible, primarily through large additional loading.

Ticino south of the Main Alpine Ridge; lower Val Moesa; lower Val Calanca; Bergell; Puschlav:

#### *Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)*

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all aspects above approximately 2000 m.

Freshly formed snowdrift accumulations can be easily triggered; somewhat older snowdrift accumulations can be unleashed primarily through large additional loading. They should be assessed with great care.

### Trend for Sunday and Monday

On both days it is expected to be heavily overcast in northern regions with some snowfall anticipated. In southern regions it will be quite sunny. Both frequency and spread of avalanche prone locations are expected to increase in northern regions, elsewhere the avalanche danger is not expected to change significantly.

#### 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  
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#### Regional avalanche bulletins (Fr. 0.50/MMS)

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LAWOVS Upper Valais  
LAWNGR North and Central Grisons  
LAWSGR South Grisons  
LAWBEO Bernese Oberland  
LAWEAN Eastern Part of the Northern Slope of the Alps

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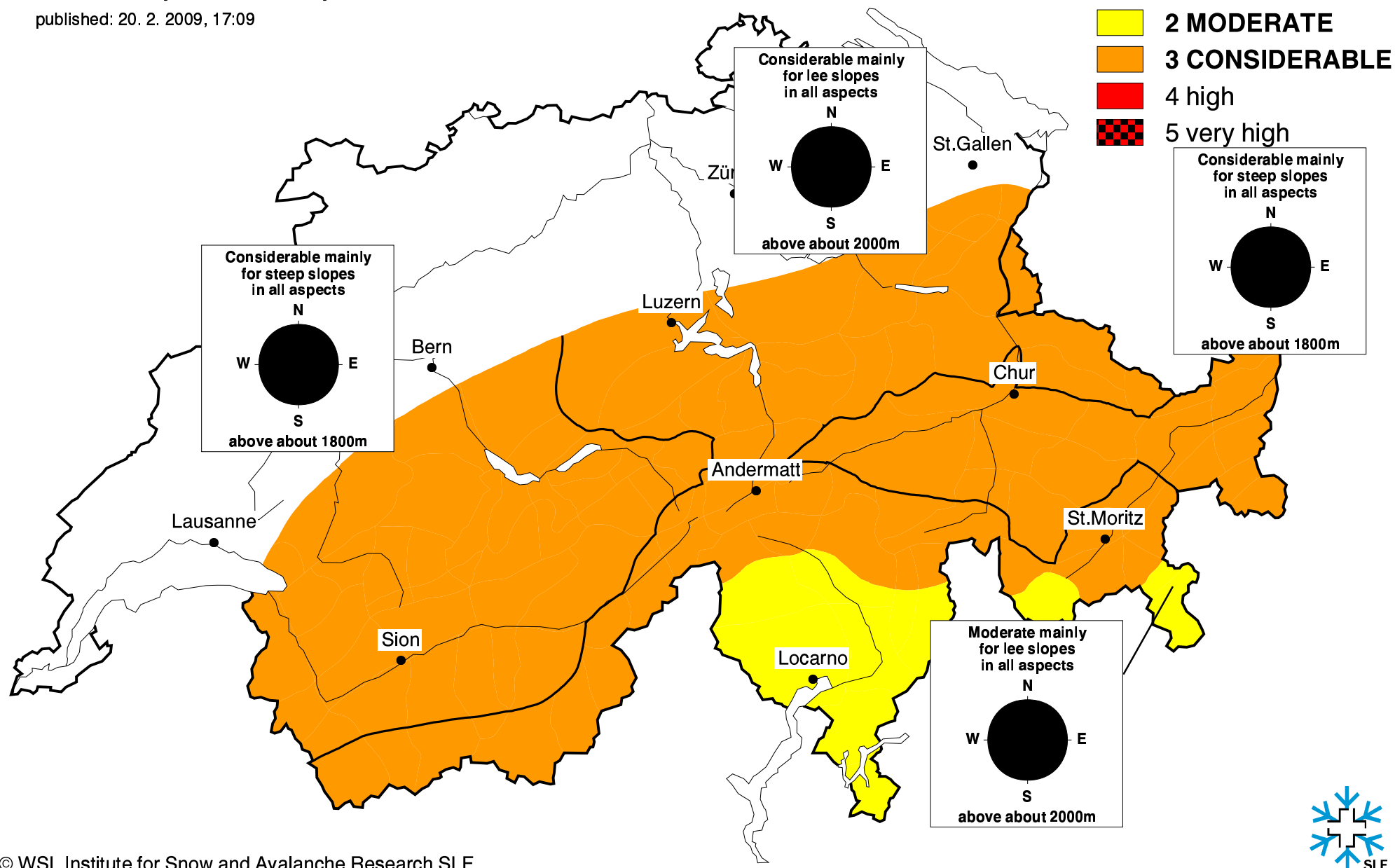
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# Avalanche danger forecast

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