



National avalanche bulletin no. 174

for Monday, 27 April 2009

issue date 26.4.2009, 18:30 hours

Heavy snowfall in southern regions, amidst significantly escalating avalanche danger

Current conditions

On Sunday there were bright spells in northern regions due to foehn wind influence, elsewhere it was heavily overcast. Along the Main Alpine Ridge in the Valais and in Ticino, there was as much as 15 cm of new snow. The midday temperatures at 2000 m were between plus 6 degrees in northern regions and minus 1 degree in southern regions. A gusty southeasterly wind was blowing at moderate strength, although on the northern Alpine Ridge in particular it was strong.

Short-term development

On Monday it is expected to be heavily overcast. Along the Main Alpine Ridge from Zermatt to the Furka Pass and in the central part of the southern flank of the Alps, 50 to 80 cm of snowfall is anticipated; along the remaining Main Alpine Ridge, in the Upper Engadine and in the bordering valleys to the south, 30 to 50 cm of new snow is expected. Further to the north, about 10 to 30 cm of snowfall is anticipated. The snowfall level will climb to 1800 to 2000 m during the morning and drop to about 1600 m in the evening. The midday temperatures at 2000 m will be zero degrees in western regions and plus 2 degrees in southeastern regions. Moderate to strong southerly winds will prevail.

Avalanche danger forecast for Monday

Upper Valais; Main Alpine Ridge; southern flank of the Alps:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

Along the Main Alpine Ridge from Zermatt to the Furka Pass and in the central part of the southern flank of the Alps, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all expositions above approximately 2000 m. Due to the heavy snowfall, the hazards will be continually escalating, reaching danger level 4, "high", during the afternoon. Over the course of the day, increasingly frequent natural avalanches are anticipated. Particularly in the avalanche corridors which have been filled by released snow masses, these can in isolated cases attain large size and surge down to lower lying areas.

In the remaining regions, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all expositions above approximately 2200 m. The avalanche danger is expected to escalate even within a given danger level. Naturally triggered avalanches are possible. Backcountry skiers and freeriders can easily unleash avalanches. For skiing and freeriding tours, increasingly critical conditions prevail.

Northern flank of the Alps not including Gotthard region; in addition, Lower Valais north of the Main Alpine Ridge; remaining Grisons:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on steep, west to north to east facing slopes above approximately 2200 m. Heavier snowfall from the south is expected in the regions along the Main Alpine Ridge, leading to the avalanche hazards climbing to danger level 3, "considerable", in those regions over the course of the afternoon. Freshly formed snowdrift accumulations should be assessed with particularly great caution.

In all regions, but particularly in southern regions, the snowpack below about 2000 m is weakened by rainfall. On north facing slopes in particular, naturally triggered wet snow avalanches can be expected.

Trend for Tuesday and Wednesday

On Tuesday it is expected to snow heavily; the most intensive snowfall will be in southern regions. The snowfall level will drop to about 1400 m. The avalanche danger is expected to increase far and wide and to some extent, escalate significantly. On Wednesday, the precipitation will slacken off measurably.

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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Avalanche danger forecast

for Monday, 27. April 2009

published: 26. 4. 2009, 16:59

Danger level

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

