

National avalanche bulletin no. 37

for Sunday, 20 December 2009

issue date 19.12.2009, 18:30 hours

Great caution urged particularly towards freshly formed snowdrift accumulations

Current conditions

Between Friday and Saturday on the northern flank of the Alps and in the Lower Valais, there was 10 to 20 cm of snowfall, locally even more. On Saturday in northern regions, in the Valais and in Grisons, it was overcast; in Ticino it was intermittently sunny. The midday temperature at 2000 m in Ticino was minus 14 degrees, in the remaining regions it was minus 17 degrees. Light northwesterly winds prevailed in western regions, elsewhere the winds were moderate.

Over the last few days, small sized snowdrift accumulations have formed primarily on east and south facing slopes.

Particularly in the inneralpine regions of the Valais and Grisons, on shade covered slopes above approximately 2200 m, the layers of snow nearest to the ground are poorly consolidated in places. In all regions, the uppermost snowpack layers are faceted and loosely packed widespread, due to the persistently low temperatures. In places with shallow snowpack, this is increasingly the case for the entire depth of the snowpack.

Short-term development

On Sunday it will be predominantly sunny during the morning hours. In the course of the day, particularly along the northern flank of the Alps and in western regions, clouds will move in. The midday temperatures at 2000 m in eastern regions will be minus 16 degrees, in the remaining regions minus 12 degrees. The wind is expected to increase in velocity, blowing at moderate strength to begin with, then at high altitudes even strong, from the northwest. Towards evening, storm strength westerly winds can be expected in some places. Large sized, brittle snowdrift accumulations are expected to form. Due to the increasing wind velocities, the avalanche danger will escalate in the course of the day.

Avalanche danger forecast for Sunday

Swiss Alps not including central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

On the northern flank of the Alps and in the Lower Valais, the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all expositions above approximately 1600 m. In the Upper Valais and in the Engadine, excluding in both regions the Main Alpine Ridge, as well as in northern Grisons, in central Grisons excluding Avers and in northern Ticino, the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in northern to southern to western expositions above approximately 2000 m. In some places there are brittle intermediate layers embedded in the snowpack. In addition, snowdrift accumulations can be triggered in all the indicated regions, although the breadth of fracture is expected to remain relative small. Prudent route selection is recommended.

On the Main Alpine Ridge from the Matterhorn into Goms and in the eastern part of the Main Alpine Ridge, as well as in the southern valleys of Grisons, the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily in gullies and bowls in northern to southern to western expositions above approximately 2200 m. Predominantly small sized snowdrift accumulations can easily be triggered and cause backcountry ski tourers and freeriders to fall. They should be evaluated with great care.

Central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri:

Low avalanche danger (Level 1)

Isolated avalanche prone locations are still to be found particularly in extremely steep terrain.

Trend for Monday and Tuesday

On Sunday night a small amount of snowfall is anticipated widespread. On Monday and Tuesday in northern regions, it will be quite sunny. The winds will shift to southwesterly and remain strong to stormy at high altitudes. Temperatures will rise. In southern regions, the skies will be heavily overcast on both days, accompanied by a bit of snowfall which, to begin with, is expected down as far as the low lying areas. The avalanche danger is expected to increase on Monday. On Tuesday the danger level will remain about the same.

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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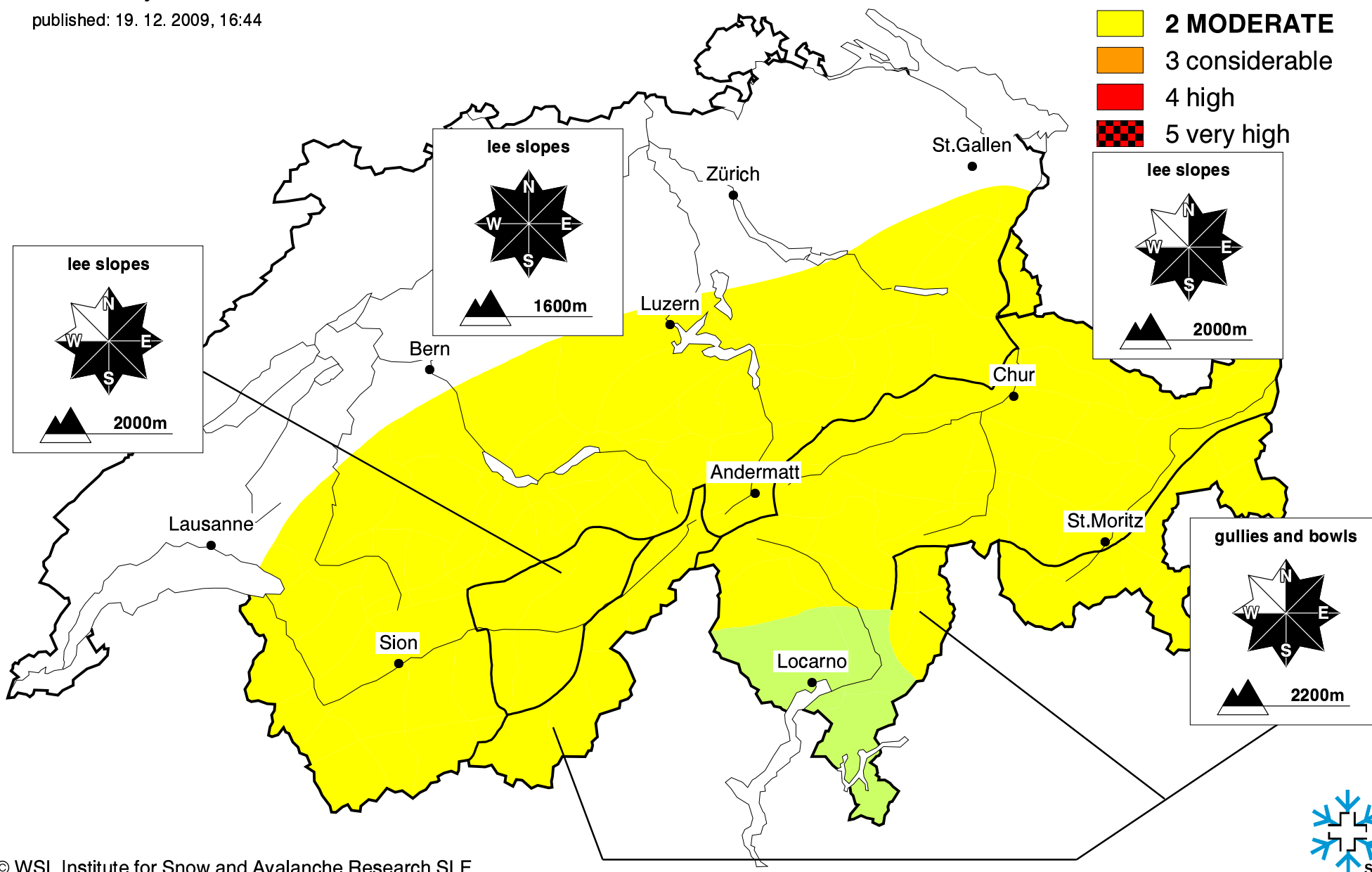
Avalanche danger forecast

for Sunday, 20. December 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**

