



National avalanche bulletin no. 38

for Monday, 21 December 2009

issue date 20.12.2009, 18:30 hours

Very delicate avalanche situation, accompanied by stormy winds

Current conditions

On Sunday it was predominantly sunny in the Swiss Alps. The midday temperatures at 2000 m were minus 15 degrees in eastern regions, minus 12 degrees in the remaining regions. By and large moderate strength westerly winds were blowing. Over the course of the last five days on the northern flank of the Alps, in the Lower Valais and in Goms, there has been 15 to 30 cm of snowfall; in some areas in the northern regions of Central Switzerland there was more than 50 cm of very loosely packed snowfall, which fell predominantly from the fogbanks themselves. In the remaining regions, there was less snowfall, or none at all. Under the influence of very low temperatures, the snowpack has transformed intensely, and is now very loosely packed in general. In all regions, layers of snow near the surface are faceted due to the persistently low temperatures. Even firmly packed layers embedded in the snowpack have become loosened crystals. In areas with little snow, this is the case for the entire depth of the snowpack.

Short-term development

On Sunday evening, the wind velocity will increase noticeably from the west and a bit of snowfall is anticipated. Temperatures are expected to rise. On Monday the midday temperatures at 2000 m in northern regions will be minus 7 degrees, on the southern flank of the Alps minus 10 degrees. On Sunday night, strong to stormy westerly winds are expected. The winds will subsequently shift to southwesterly to southerly and remain strong to stormy at high altitudes in western regions in particular. Large sized, brittle snowdrift accumulations are expected to form atop loosely packed intermediate layers. Influenced by the winds, the avalanche danger will rapidly escalate. Widespread naturally triggered avalanches are expected.

Avalanche danger forecast for Monday

Swiss Alps not including central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

On the northern flank of the Alps, in the Lower Valais, in the northern Valais and in Goms, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all expositions above approximately 1600 m. Snowdrift accumulations in particular can be naturally released and/or easily triggered. In the central regions of the northern flank of the Alps, medium sized avalanches are expected.

In the southern Upper Valais not including Goms, in Grisons and in northern Ticino, the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all expositions above approximately 2000 m. In these regions as well, avalanches can be easily triggered. The avalanche prone locations are widespread, but potential avalanches are expected to be predominantly small in size.

In all the indicated regions, extensive experience, as well as detailed knowledge of avalanche perils and assessment, are imperative in outlying terrain away from secured ski slopes.

Central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily in gullies and bowls in northern to southern to western expositions above approximately 2000 m. The snowdrift accumulations are brittle and can easily be triggered. The major hazard with small sized avalanches is that they cause backcountry ski tourers and freeriders to fall.

Trend for Tuesday and Wednesday

On Monday night a small amount of snowfall is expected widespread. Whereas in southern regions it will continue to snow during the morning hours on Tuesday, the skies in northern regions are expected to clear up, accompanied by foehn winds. On Wednesday, the foehn winds will slacken off and a bit of additional snowfall is expected down to low lying areas. On the southern flank of the Alps, there may well be more than 30 cm of snowfall. The avalanche danger will gradually subside in northern regions. In southern regions it is expected to increase in some areas.

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)

Weather Information in collaboration with MeteoSwiss

0900 162 138 / 338 Alpine Weather Report MeteoSwiss phone/fax
(phone: CHF 1.20/min) (fax: CHF 2.--/min)

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>

WAP: wap.slf.ch

Teletext: Page 782 (SF DRS)

Phone: 187 (Fr. 0.50/call and min)

Feedback information:

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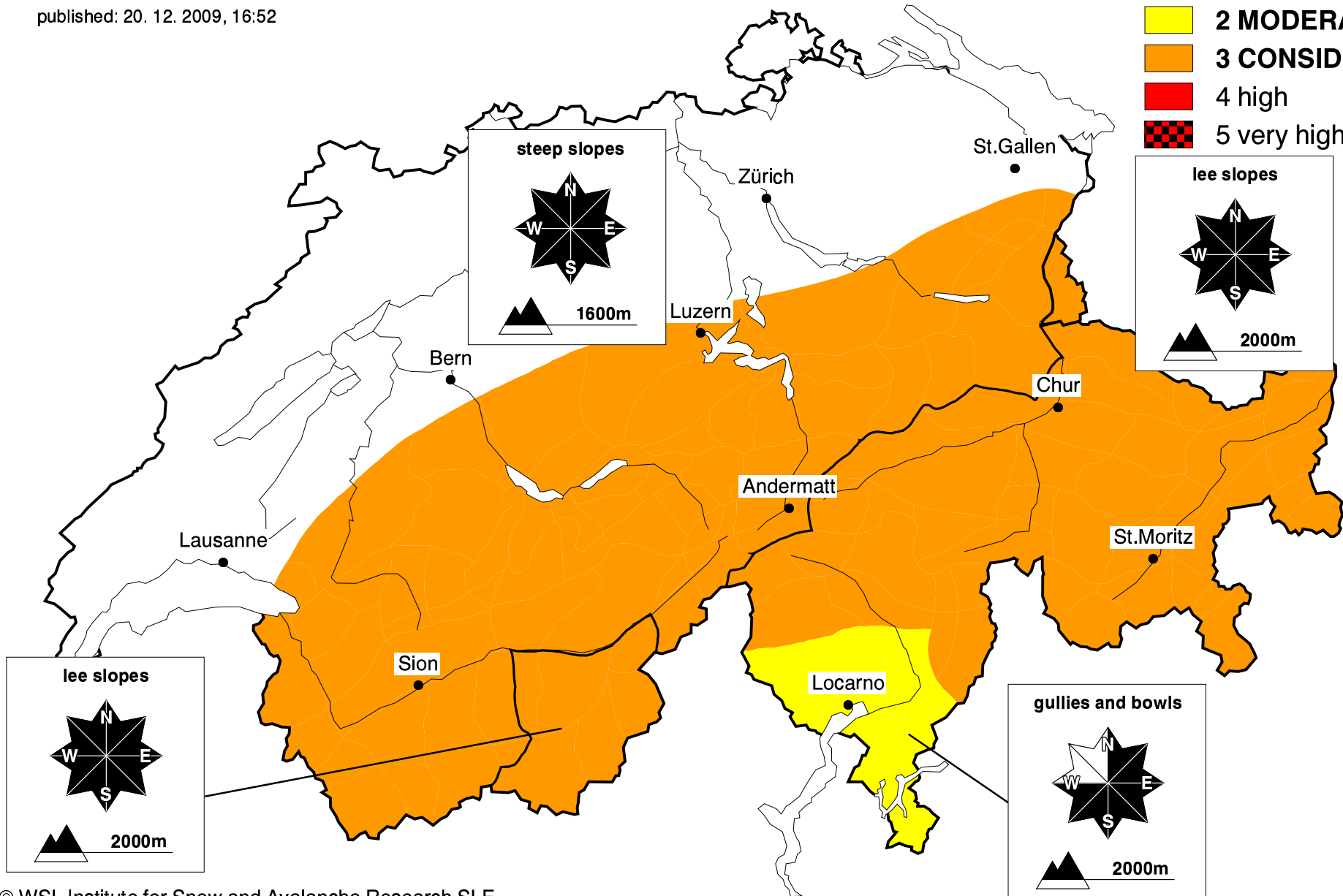
Avalanche danger forecast

for Monday, 21. December 2009

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Danger level

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








Avalanche danger forecast

for Monday, 21. December 2009

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Danger level

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

