

National avalanche bulletin no. 43

for Saturday, 26 December 2009

issue date 25.12.2009, 18:30 hours

Dangerous avalanche situation for backcountry skiers in outlying terrain

Current conditions

On Christmas Day it was predominantly overcast, accompanied by some precipitation. The snowfall level dropped from about 2000 m in the morning down to about 1000 m in the northern regions; in southeastern regions, the snowfall level remained quite high. By evening above approximately 2000 m in Ticino and in southern Grisons, there was 40 to 60 cm of snowfall; in the Valais, in the western part of the northern flank of the Alps, in the Gotthard region as well as in northern and central Grisons, 20 to 40 cm; elsewhere 10 to 20 cm. The midday temperatures at 2000 m were between minus 6 degrees in the furthestmost northern regions and minus 1 degree in southeastern regions. A strong to stormy southerly wind was blowing. In the course of the day, the wind shifted to westerly to northwesterly and tapered off to moderate strength. Large sized snowdrift accumulations have formed at higher altitudes. Primarily in southern Grisons, large natural avalanches have been triggered. Below about 2000 m the uppermost layers of snowpack have become thoroughly wet from the rain. The freshly fallen snow deposited atop this surface insulates the snowpack so that the cold can penetrate only slowly. Thus, the snowpack is stabilising extremely haltingly.

Short-term development

On Friday night a few additional centimeters of snowfall is expected. On Saturday morning it will be sunny. In the course of the day, clouds will move in from the west. The midday temperatures at 2000 m will be minus 2 degrees in northern regions and minus 6 degrees in southern regions. During the night, the northwesterly wind will be strong and give rise to further snowdrift accumulations. On Saturday morning, the wind will shift to southwesterly and slacken off significantly.

Avalanche danger forecast for Saturday

Northern Ticino; Zervreila; Rheinwald; Avers; southern valleys of Grisons; Engadine not including Silvretta and Samnaun:

High avalanche danger (Level 4)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all expositions above approximately 2000 m. Particularly on Friday night, additional avalanches can be naturally triggered due to the burst of northerly winds. During the day on Saturday, the avalanche activity will subside. For backcountry skiers and freeriders in outlying terrain away from secured ski runs, the situation is highly critical.

Valais; northern flank of the Alps; remaining Grisons; central Ticino; Sotto Ceneri:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all expositions above approximately 2000 m. Freshly formed snowdrift accumulations are evident in all expositions due to the strongly rotating winds, and are often quite difficult to recognize. They can be easily triggered even by a single backcountry skier or freerider. The underlying layers of snowdrift are also very delicate in some places. In far western regions, on the Main Alpine Ridge of the Valais and in areas bordering the regions denoted with high avalanche danger (level 4), the avalanche prone locations are more widely distributed and larger in size than in the remaining regions. In outlying terrain away from secured ski slopes, extensive experience and detailed knowledge of avalanche dangers and their assessment are imperative.

In all regions of the Swiss Alps, the danger of wet snowslides is diminishing significantly. Below about 1800 m, however, wet snowslides are in isolated cases still possible.

Trend for Sunday and Monday

In northern regions it will be overcast on Sunday and a bit of snowfall is anticipated during the afternoon hours. On Monday it will initially be sunny, in the course of the day it will become overcast. In southern regions it is expected to be quite sunny on both days. Temperatures will remain low. A moderate to strong westerly to northwesterly wind will prevail. The avalanche danger will gradually recede.

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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(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>

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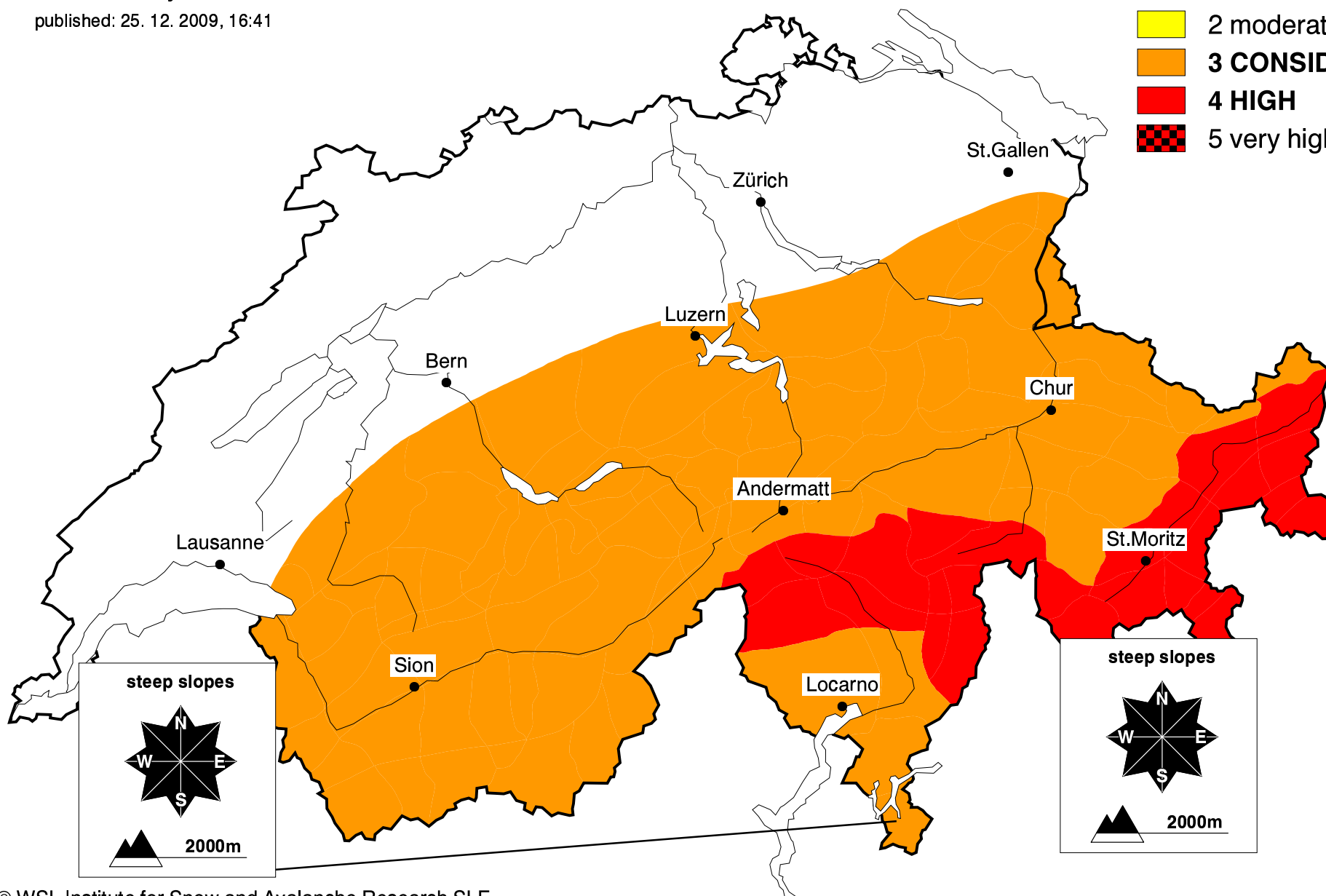
Avalanche danger forecast

for Saturday, 26. December 2009

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Danger level

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








Avalanche danger forecast

for Saturday, 26. December 2009

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Danger level

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

