

National avalanche bulletin no. 51

for Sunday, 3 January 2010

issue date 2.1.2010, 18:30 hours

Considerable avalanche danger in some regions

Current conditions

On Saturday in northern regions, it was heavily overcast in general. In southern regions it was predominantly sunny, accompanied by northerly foehn winds. Between Friday midday and Saturday afternoon on the northern flank of the Alps from the eastern part of the Bernese Oberland into the Alpstein region there was 20 to 40 cm of snowfall, locally as much as 60 cm. In the remaining western parts of the northern flank of the Alps, in Urseren, in Lower Valais, in northern and central Grisons as well as in the northern Upper Engadine there was 10 to 20 cm of snowfall, elsewhere less. The midday temperatures at 2000 m were minus 14 degrees in northern regions and minus 11 degrees in southern regions. Gusty northwesterly to northerly winds of moderate strength were blowing.

The new fallen snow is extremely loosely packed. At high altitudes, snowdrift accumulations have formed which are prone to triggering. In the Valais and the inneralpine regions of Grisons in particular, the base of the snowpack at high altitudes is weak in places.

Short-term development

On Sunday in the northern regions it will be partly sunny amidst high altitude cloudbanks. In the southern regions it will be predominantly sunny. The midday temperatures at 2000 m will be minus 10 degrees in western regions and minus 12 degrees in eastern regions. The westerly to northwesterly wind is expected to slacken off Saturday night and subsequently prevail at light to moderate strength.

Avalanche danger forecast for Sunday

Northern flank of the Alps not including Prealps; in addition, Valais; northern Ticino; Grisons not including the regions of the Lower Engadine, Puschlav and Münstertal:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

On the northern flank of the Alps excluding the Prealps and Urseren and in the northern Lower Valais, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all expositions above approximately 1800 m. The major hazards stem from the most recent new fallen snow and fresh snowdrift masses. Avalanches can in some places sweep along the older layers of snowdrift which formed in the final days of 2009. Even a single person can trigger slab avalanches. Naturally triggered avalanches are possible in isolated cases, particularly in the central and eastern parts of the northern flank of the Alps.

In the remaining parts of the Valais, in Urseren, in northern Ticino and in the indicated regions of Grisons, the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily in wind loaded slopes in all expositions above approximately 2200 m. Freshly formed snowdrift accumulations can easily be released. In addition, particularly in transition areas from shallow to deep snow, avalanches can be triggered in the old snowpack. Naturally triggered avalanches are possible in isolated cases, primarily on the Main Alpine Ridge. In all regions of this danger level, extensive experience in reading and assessing the avalanche situation is imperative for all backcountry skiing and freeriding tours.

Northern Prealps; Lower Engadine; Puschlav; Münstertal; central Ticino; Sotto Ceneri:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all expositions. In the northern Prealps as well as in central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri, the avalanche prone locations are to be found above approximately 1600 m; in the Lower Engadine, above approximately 2000 m. In all regions of this danger level, however above all in central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri, freshly formed snowdrift accumulations must be evaluated with great care. In the Prealps, the major peril lies in the new fallen snow; in the Lower Engadine and in the Puschlav and the Münstertal, slab avalanches can even be triggered in more deeply embedded layers of the old snowpack. A cautious route selection is essential.

Trend for Monday and Tuesday

It is expected to be generally overcast. In northern and western regions, a bit of snowfall is anticipated. The avalanche danger will recede only gradually.

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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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






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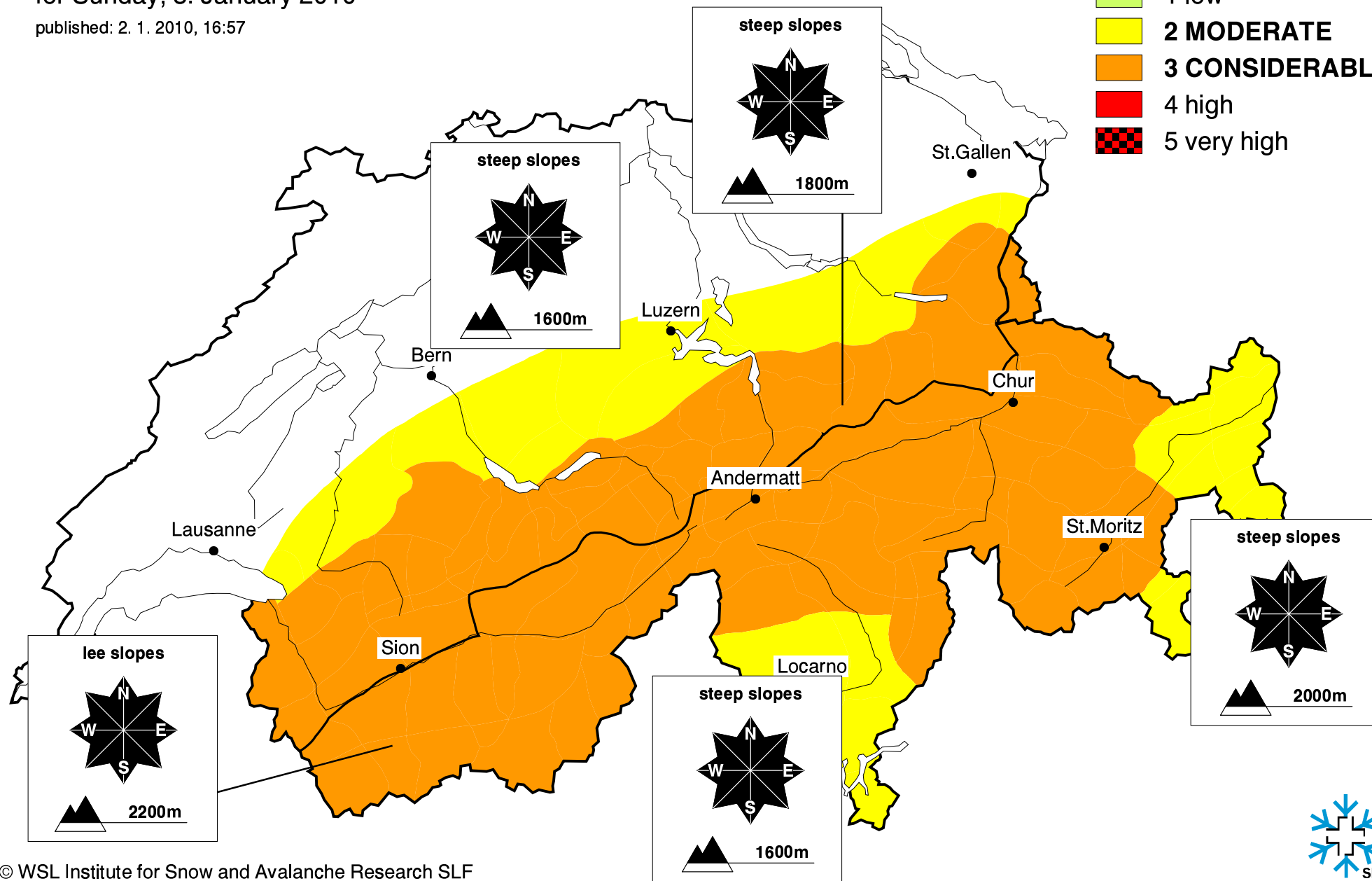
Avalanche danger forecast

for Sunday, 3. January 2010

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Danger level

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








Avalanche danger forecast

for Sunday, 3. January 2010

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Danger level

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

