

National avalanche bulletin no. 98

for Friday, 19 February 2010

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Snowfall in the south in particular, snow drift accumulations covered by fresh snow

Current conditions

On Thursday it was mostly cloudy in the west and north. The weather brightened up in the south and became sunny, as it was already in the east. The midday temperature at 2000 m was about minus 1 degree. The southwesterly wind eased to become moderate in the west and light elsewhere. In the last three days, 20 to 35 cm of snow have fallen in the central part of the southern flank of the Alps and the Simplon region. On the adjacent main Alpine ridge and in the Bernina region, 5 to 20 cm have fallen; less snow has fallen elsewhere.

In the period until Thursday morning, the southerly wind, which was strong at times, gave rise to hard snow drift accumulations that are very prone to triggering. Underneath the fresh snow drift accumulations, the snowpack is faceted and loosely bonded over a wide area. Below approximately 2000 m, glide cracks opened on south facing slopes in particular and some avalanches were released.

Short-term development

On Friday, snow will fall above approximately 1000 m. The largest quantities, 15 to 30 cm, will fall on the southern flank of the Alps. In western Lower Valais and Engadine, 10 to 20 cm will fall, but less than 10 cm of snow will fall in the other regions. The midday temperature at 2000 m will be about minus 3 degrees. The southerly wind will be occasionally strong in the east, but otherwise mostly moderate. In the afternoon, the wind will ease in strength and become northerly to westerly. On the main Alpine ridge and to the north, the fresh snow is lying on the easily released snow drift accumulations that formed in midweek. Fresh snow drift accumulations may form in Grisons in particular.

Avalanche danger forecast for Friday

Northern Alpine ridge on the northern flank of the Alps; Trient; Champex; main Alpine ridge; central Grisons; Upper Engadine; southern flank of the Alps:

Considerable avalanche danger (level 3)

In the regions of the northern Alpine ridge belonging to the northern flank of the Alps, excluding the Gotthard region, the avalanche prone locations are to be found, in particular, on southwest to north to southeast facing wind-loaded slopes above approximately 1800 m. In the other regions subject to this danger level, they are to be found on steep slopes of all aspects above approximately 2000 m. Snow drift accumulations that are covered with fresh snow and difficult to recognise are particularly dangerous. The bonding of the fresh snow with the old snowpack is poor. These accumulations can be released easily. For those venturing off piste, a lot of experience in the assessment of avalanche danger is very important.

Other regions on the northern flank of the Alps; Valais excluding Chablais, Trient, Champex and the regions on the main Alpine ridge; northern Grisons; northern Lower Engadine:

Moderate avalanche danger (level 2)

Avalanche prone locations are to be found, in particular, on southwest to north to southeast facing steep slopes. They are to be found above approximately 1800 m in the regions to the north of the northern Alpine ridge, and above approximately 2000 m elsewhere. Avalanches can be released especially at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack and in snow drift accumulations. Careful route selection is still recommended.

In all regions, full-depth avalanches, including slab avalanches, can occur at low and intermediate altitudes.

Trend for Saturday and Sunday

Snow will continue to fall in the north in particular until Saturday, when the weather will brighten up. Sunday will be generally sunny. The avalanche danger will increase in some regions on Saturday. It will remain unchanged on Sunday.

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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0900 162 138 / 338 Alpine Weather Report MeteoSwiss phone/fax
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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>

WAP: wap.slf.ch

Teletext: Page 782 (SF DRS)

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Feedback information:

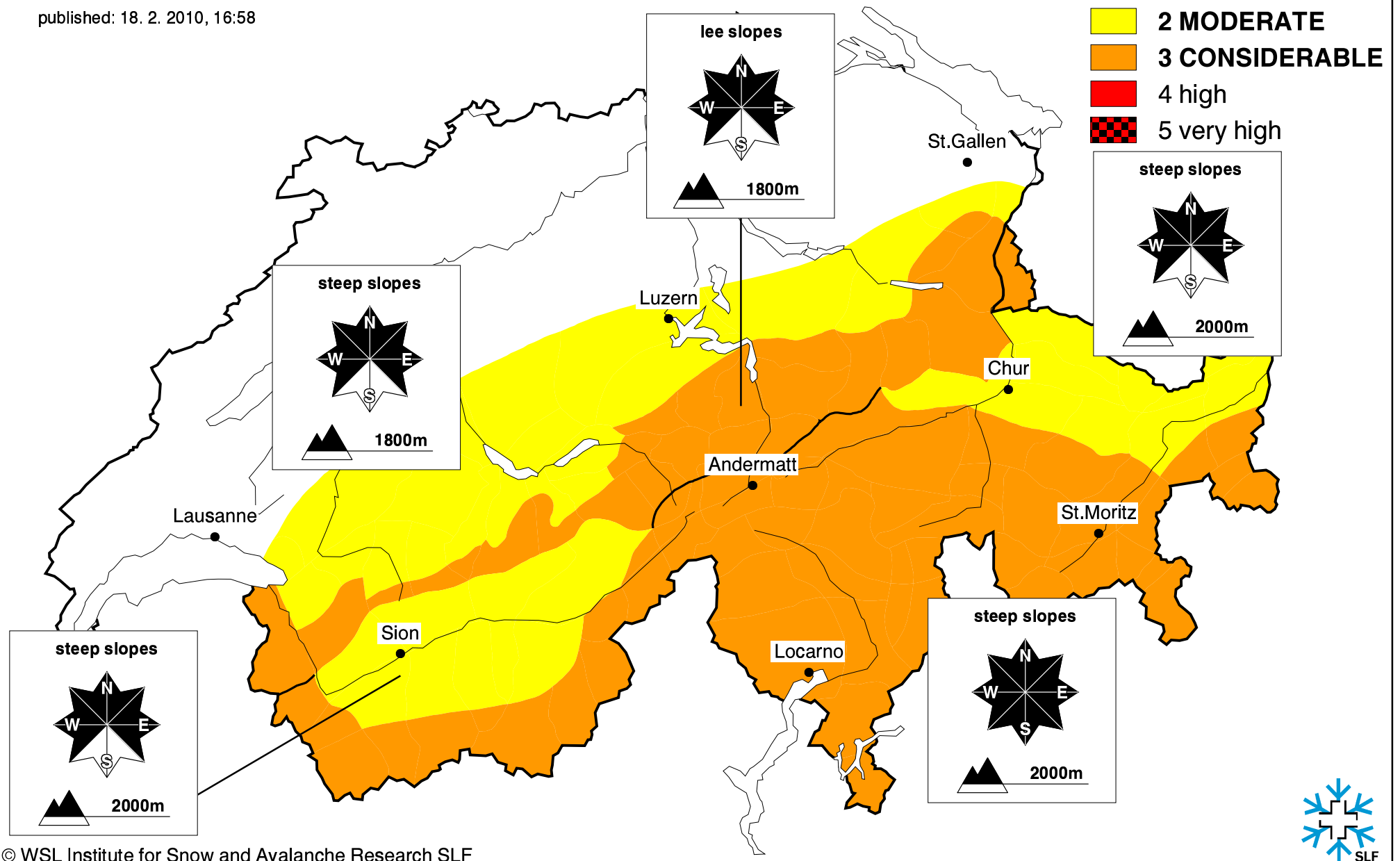
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