

National avalanche bulletin no. 99

for Saturday, 20 February 2010

issue date 19.2.2010, 18:30 hours

Snow drift accumulations mostly covered by fresh snow

Current conditions

Friday was very cloudy in all regions of the Swiss Alps, and snow fell in the west, south and the Bernina region in particular. Since Thursday, approximately 5 cm of snow have fallen in the west, and 10 to 20 cm in the other forenamed regions. Larger quantities have fallen in some localities on the southern flank of the Alps and in the Bernina region. Further north and east, only a few centimetres of snow have fallen. The midday temperature at 2000 m was about minus 3 degrees. The southerly wind was occasionally strong at high altitude, but otherwise mostly light to moderate. During the afternoon its direction changed to northerly. Over three days and with some interruptions, 15 to 30 cm of snow have fallen in the extreme west of Lower Valais and on the main Alpine ridge and to the south, but less snow has fallen elsewhere.

During Thursday night, the southerly wind will be strong at times and transport further snow, in particular above the tree line. Both the freshly transported snow and the snow drift accumulations that formed in midweek are prone to triggering. Underneath the snow drift accumulations, the snowpack is moist on south facing slopes up to intermediate altitudes. In other aspects, it is faceted and loosely bonded over a wide area down to low altitudes.

Short-term development

On Saturday, a further 5 cm to 15 cm of snow will fall above approximately 1000 m, in particular in the north and the mountains of Grisons. During the day the weather will brighten up temporarily from the west and south. The weather will become appreciably cooler. The midday temperature at 2000 m will be about minus 9 degrees. The northwesterly wind will be mostly moderate.

The falling temperature will cause bonding of the slightly moist snowpack up to high altitudes, in particular on south facing slopes. Very little change will take place on north facing slopes.

Avalanche danger forecast for Saturday

Chablais; Vaud Alps; central part of the northern flank of the Alps excluding the prealps; western Lower Valais; main Alpine ridge; central Grisons; Upper Engadine; southern flank of the Alps:

Considerable avalanche danger (level 3)

In Chablais, the Vaud Alps and the central part of the northern flank of the Alps excluding both the prealps and 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 western Lower Valais, on the main Alpine ridge, in central Grisons and Upper Engadine and on the southern flank of the Alps, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes of all aspects above approximately 2000 m. Visible and covered snow drift accumulations are particularly dangerous. The bonding of these accumulations with the old snowpack remains poor in places. They can be released easily. Avalanches can therefore release parts of the old snowpack as well. For those venturing off piste, a lot of experience in the assessment of avalanche danger is required.

Prealps; other regions on the northern flank of the Alps; Valais excluding both western Lower Valais and the regions on the main Alpine ridge; northern Grisons; northern Lower Engadine:

Moderate avalanche danger (level 2)

In the prealps and the other regions on the northern flank of the Alps, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes above approximately 1800 m. In the relevant regions of Valais and in northern Grisons and northern Lower Engadine, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes above approximately 2000 m. Avalanches can be released in particular at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack. Fresh snow drift accumulations are also to be assessed especially critically. Careful route selection is still recommended.

The danger of full-depth avalanches, including slab avalanches, will decrease temporarily above approximately 1000 m.

Trend for Sunday and Monday

Sunday will be generally sunny. Towards the evening, light snowfall may occur again in the west and south. On Monday, the weather will be changeable in the north and sunny in the south. The avalanche danger will decrease slowly.

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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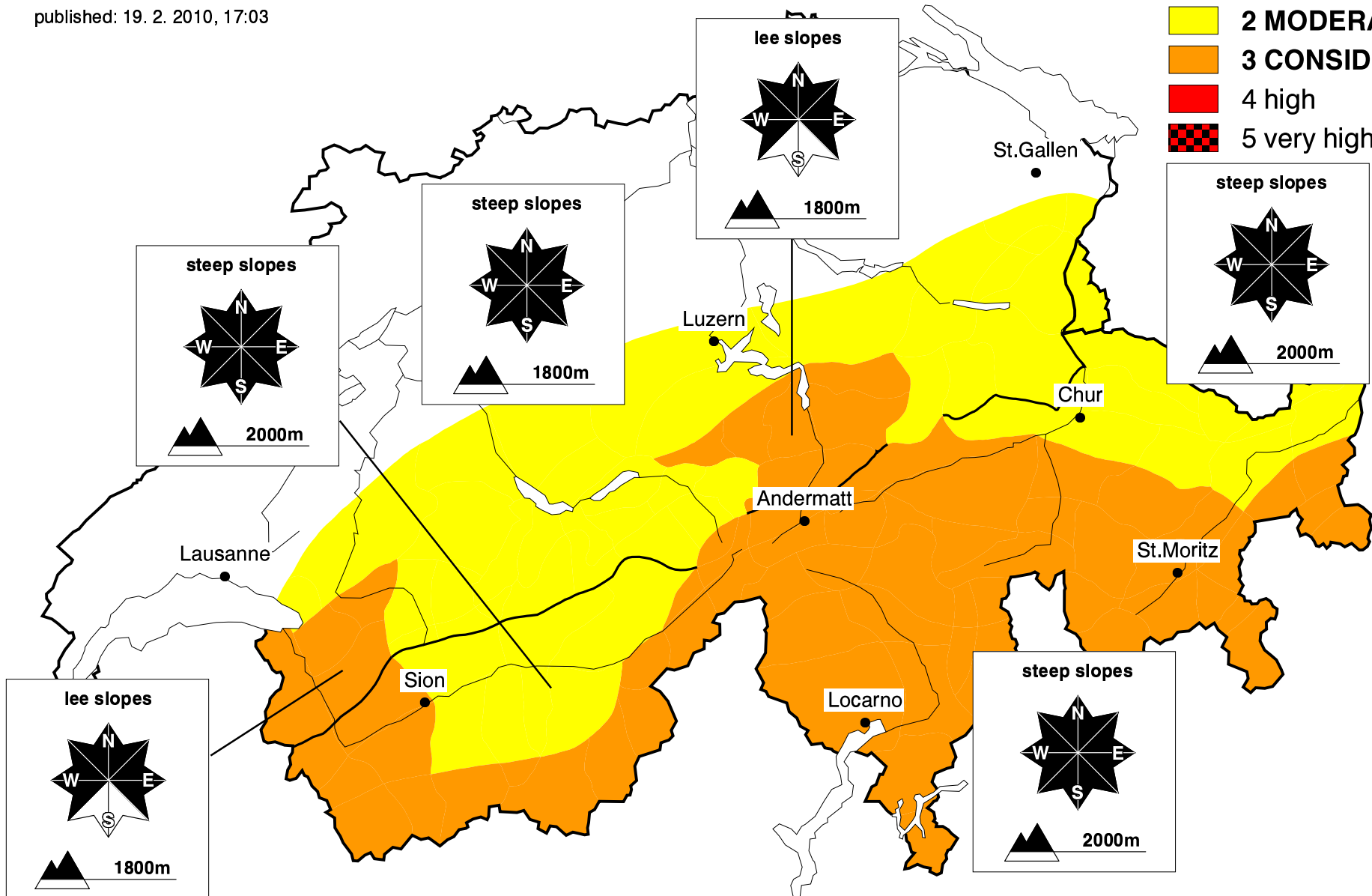
Avalanche danger forecast

for Saturday, 20. February 2010

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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

