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WSL Istituto per lo studio della neve e delle valanghe SLF
WSL Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research SLF

National avalanche bulletin no. 125

for Thursday, 18 March 2010

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Increasing danger of wet avalanches over the course of the day

Current conditions

On Wednesday it was predominantly sunny, in eastern and southern regions it was intermittently overcast. The midday temperatures at 2000 m were between zero and plus 1 degree. A moderate wind from generally westerly directions was blowing on the northern flank of the Alps, elsewhere the wind was of light to moderate velocity. The wind caused the lightweight snow on the uppermost layers of the snowpack to be transported, particularly in the central and eastern parts of the northern flank of the Alps.
The snowpack manifests a highly diversified structure even across small surface areas. In intermediate and more deeply embedded layers, it is faceted and loosely packed widespread, particularly in the inneralpine regions and to some extent in the central and western parts of the northern flank of the Alps. The snowpack in the eastern part of the northern flank of the Alps, on the southern flank of the Alps and on heavily frequented slopes is more favourable. The new fallen snow and snowdrift of recent days are poorly bonded with the old snowpack in some regions.

Short-term development

On Thursday it will be sunny, accompanied by increasingly dense high altitude cloudbanks. A light to moderate southwesterly wind will be blowing. The temperatures are expected to continue rising; by midday at 2000 m they will be plus 4 degrees in northern regions and plus 2 degrees in southern regions.
On steep, sun bathed slopes in particular, the snowpack will be weakened by the daytime warming cycle and the solar radiation.

Avalanche danger forecast for Thursday

Eastern part of the northern flank of the Alps:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in northwestern to northern to southeastern exposition above approximately 1800 m. The snowdrift accumulations of recent days can in some places be triggered by a single backcountry skier or freerider. Particularly on backcountry tours, extensive experience in spotting and evaluating avalanche hazards is imperative.

Western and central parts of the northern flank of the Alps; Valais; Grisons; northern Ticino:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

In the western and central parts of the northern flank of the Alps, the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on steep slopes of western to northern to southeastern exposition above approximately 2000 m. Avalanches can be triggered especially through large additional loading. The snowdrift accumulations of recent days, which are generally small in size, can be easily triggered. They should be avoided whenever possible.

In the Valais, the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on steep, west to north to east facing slopes above approximately 2200 m. Above all else through large additional loading, avalanches can be released which in some regions can fracture down in the old snowpack, particularly in central Valais.

In northern Ticino and in Grisons, the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on steep, southwest to north to southeast facing slopes above approximately 2000 m. The snowdrift accumulations of the last few days are more frequent and widespread in northern Grisons and can in some places still be easily triggered. They should be avoided whenever possible. In addition, avalanches can in isolated cases fracture down in the old snowpack, particularly in central Grisons and in the Lower Engadine.

In all regions of this danger level, a cautious route selection is important.

Central Ticino; Sotto Ceneri:

Low avalanche danger (Level 1)

In all regions of the Swiss Alps, the danger of wet snow avalanches is expected to increase over the course of the day. On the northern flank of the Alps, in the Valais and in northern and central Grisons, the danger level "Considerable" (Level 3) will be reached. Especially on steep slopes of southern exposition, moist sluffs and, below approximately 2200 m, wet snow avalanches can be expected. In those regions with a weakened snowpack, superficial avalanches can in some places sweep along more deeply embedded layers of the old snowpack and thereby lead to medium sized avalanches forming. In terrain of southern exposition, backcountry skiing and freeriding tours should be brought to a close early in the day.

Trend for Friday and Saturday

On Friday it will be generally overcast to begin with, amidst increasingly frequent bright intervals from the west. On Saturday it will be cloudy in southern and in western regions. In eastern regions there will be foehn wind-induced bright spells. The peril of dry avalanches is expected to subside. The danger of wet snow avalanches will increase throughout the course of each day.

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
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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)
Phone: 187 (Fr. 0.50/call and min)
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Danger forecast for dry snow avalanches

for Thursday, 18. March 2010

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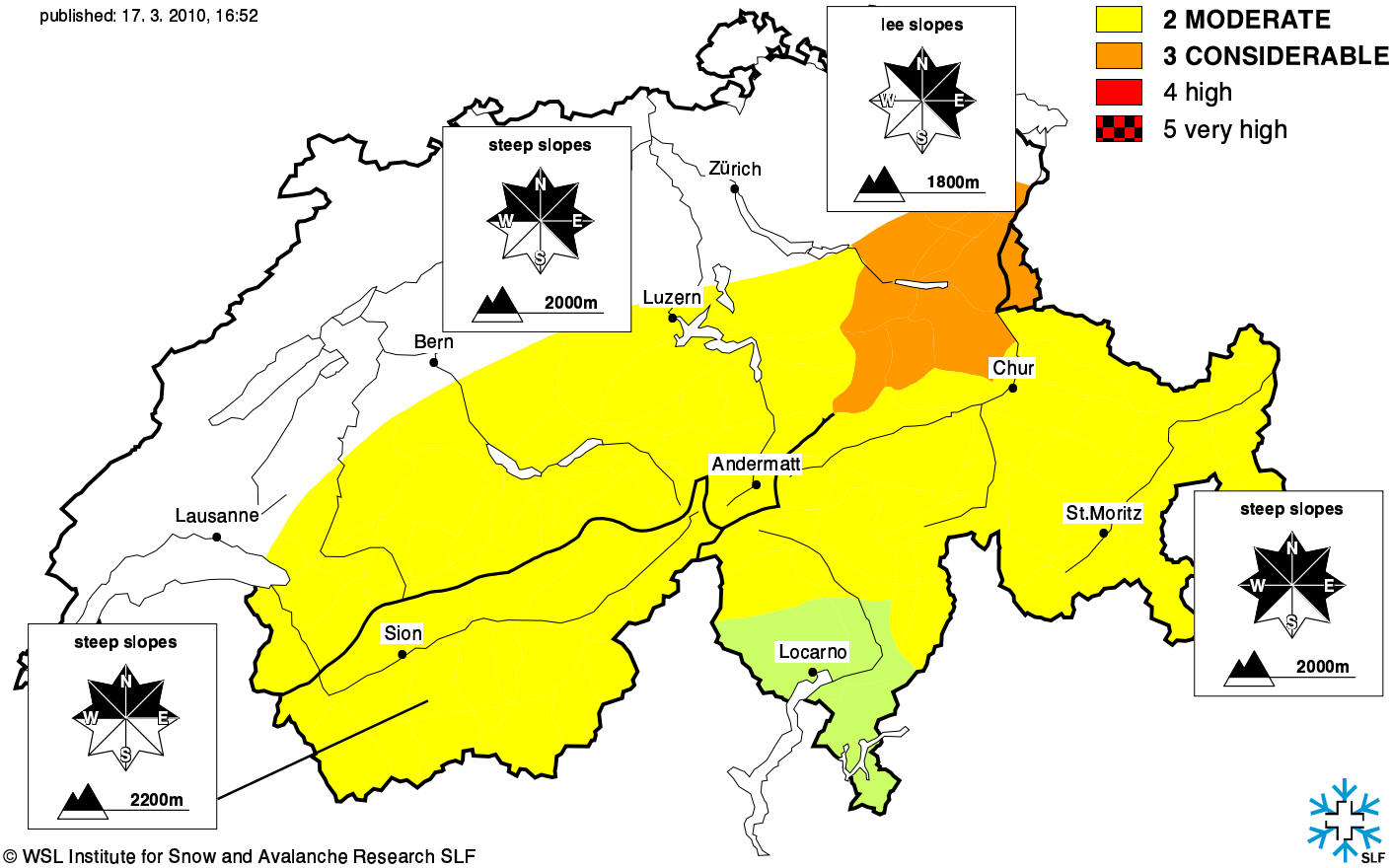
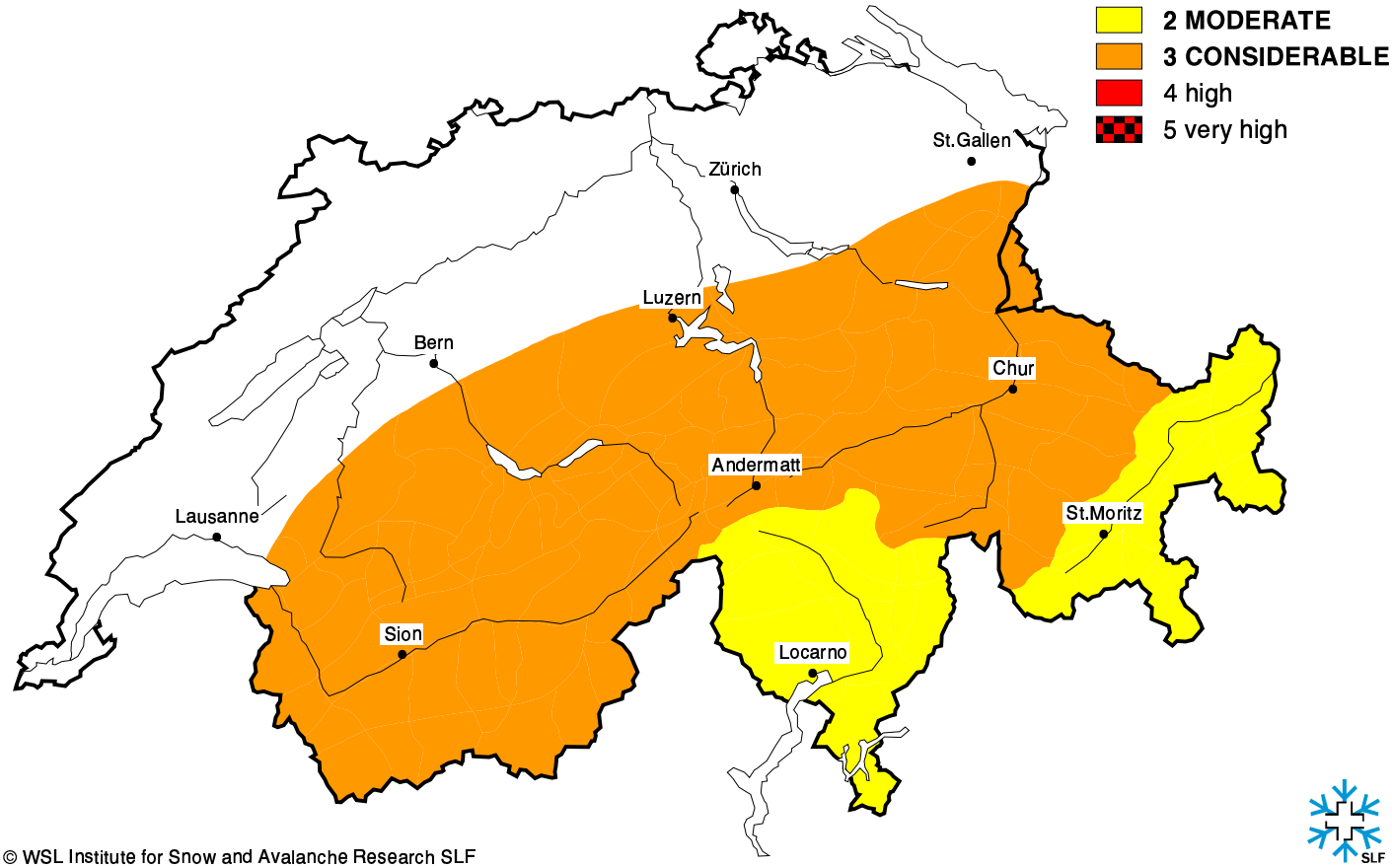


Danger of wet snow avalanches in the course of the day

for Thursday, 18. March 2010



Danger forecast for dry snow avalanches

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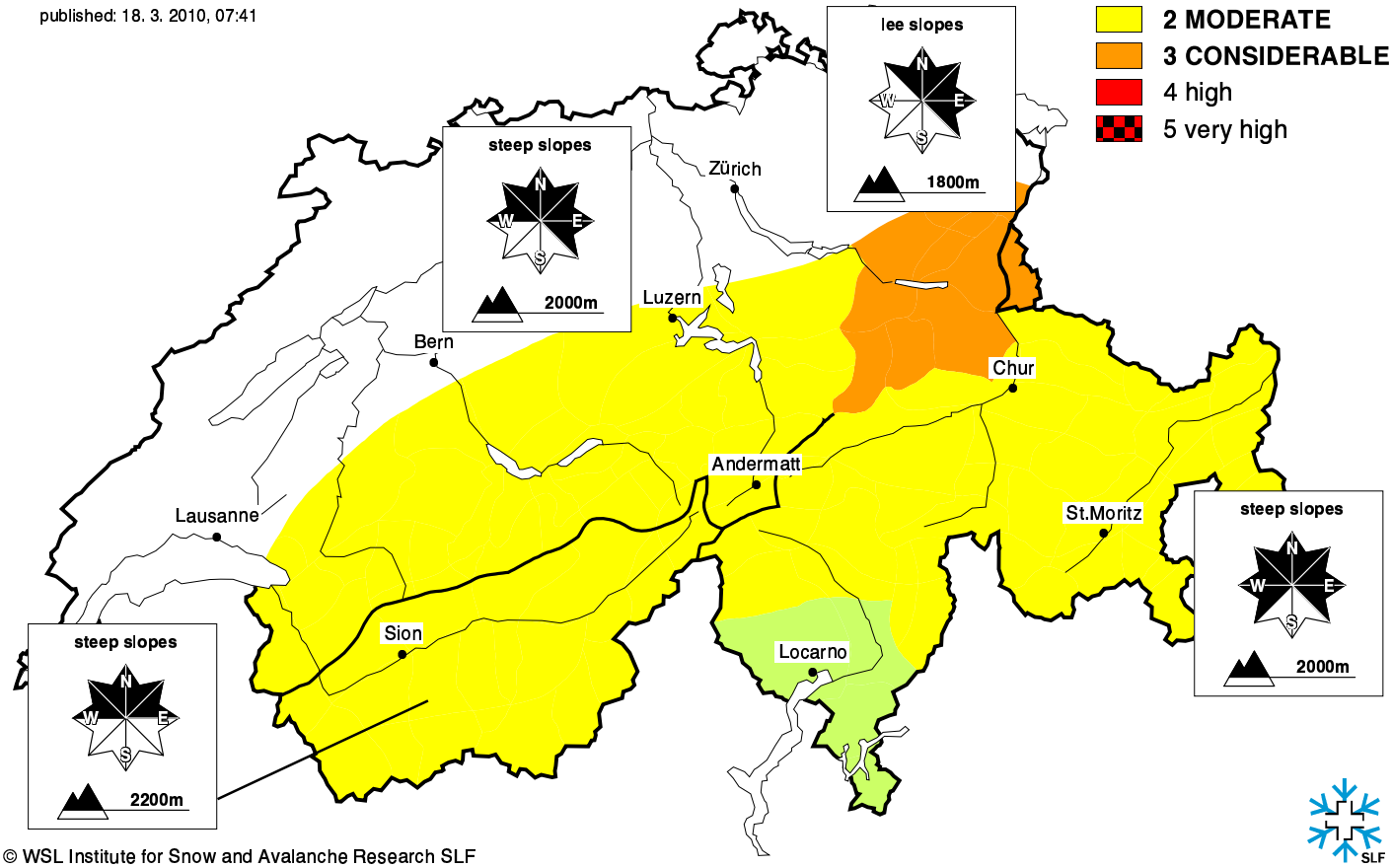

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