WSL-Institut für Schnee- und Lawinenforschung SLF
WSL Institut pour l'étude de la neige et des avalanches SLF
WSL Istituto per lo studio della neve e delle valanghe SLF
WSL Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research SLF

National avalanche bulletin no. 48

for Boxing Day, 26 December 2010

issue date 25.12.2010, 18:30 hours

Snowdrift accumulations are the major cause of danger

Current conditions

On Christmas Day it was overcast, accompanied by intermittent light snowfall. The northerly wind was blowing generally at light to moderate velocity; in the Simplon region, in northern Ticino and in the Upper Engadine, winds were sometimes strong. Snow was transported into areas adjacent to ridge lines and pass areas more than anywhere else. The midday temperatures at 2000 m were between minus 13 degrees in northern regions and minus 5 degrees in southern regions.
In southern regions, the great masses of new fallen snow are stabilising. In the remaining regions, the old snowdrift accumulations have been blanketed over by freshly fallen snow. These drifted masses can be easily triggered from place to place, since they have been deposited on top of faceted, loosely packed old snow. This is especially the case for the central and southern regions of the Valais. Transportable snow now lies atop the uppermost snowpack surface in all regions of the Swiss Alps.

Short-term development

During the hours of the morning on Boxing Day, it will turn increasingly sunny in western regions. Elsewhere it will remain heavily overcast. In the furthermost eastern regions, the snowfall will come to an end. During the afternoon, the skies will clear everywhere in the Swiss Alps. The midday temperatures at 2000 m will be minus 13 degrees in northern regions and minus 10 degrees in southern regions. Particularly in the western part of the northern flank of the Alps, even at intermediate altitudes, the northerly bise wind will be blowing at strong velocity. At high altitudes in western regions, the northeasterly wind will be strong, in eastern and southern regions generally of moderate velocity.

Avalanche danger forecast for Boxing Day

Western and central parts of the northern flank of the Alps not including Prealps east of Thun; Valais not including the regions Trient, Ovronnaz, Montana and Lötschental; Ticino; central Grisons; Upper Engadine; Val Calanca; Val Moesa; Bergell; Puschlav:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all expositions. In the indicated regions of the western part of the northern flank of the Alps, the danger zones are above approximately 1600 m, elsewhere above approximately 2000 m. Freshly formed snowdrift accumulations can be easily triggered even by a single backcountry skier or freerider. They should be avoided. Lying beneath the new fallen snow and freshly drifted snow are older layers of snowdrift which, particularly in the central and southern Valais, can be easily triggered. These snowdrift masses are no longer visible, but generally are to be found in gullies, bowls or behind concavities in the terrain. In the other regions as well, avalanches unleashed over the uppermost layers of the snowpack can from place to place fracture down in the old snowpack and subsequently attain medium size. In all regions of this danger level, extensive experience in the evaluation of avalanche hazards is essential on backcountry skiing and freeriding tours.

Prealps east of Thun; eastern part of the northern flank of the Alps; northern Grisons; Lower Engadine; Münstertal; the regions Trient, Ovronnaz, Montana and Lötschental:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all expositions. In the indicated sectors of the Prealps and in the eastern part of the northern flank of the Alps, the danger zones are above approximately 1600 m, in the remaining regions of this danger level they are above approximately 2000 m. The danger stems primarily from older snowdrift accumulations, which are generally to be found in gullies, bowls and at crested rims. They have been blanketed over with new fallen snow, making them recognizable only with difficulty. Freshly formed snowdrift accumulations, moreover, must also be evaluated with great care.

Trend for Monday and Tuesday

Following a night of clear skies, it will be very sunny on Monday. On Monday night in western regions, the cloud cover will increase; in the course of the day on Tuesday, in eastern regions as well. In southern regions it will remain very sunny. Temperatures are expected to rise significantly. The avalanche danger will recede only incrementally.

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
(phone: CHF 1.20/min) (fax: CHF 2.--/min)

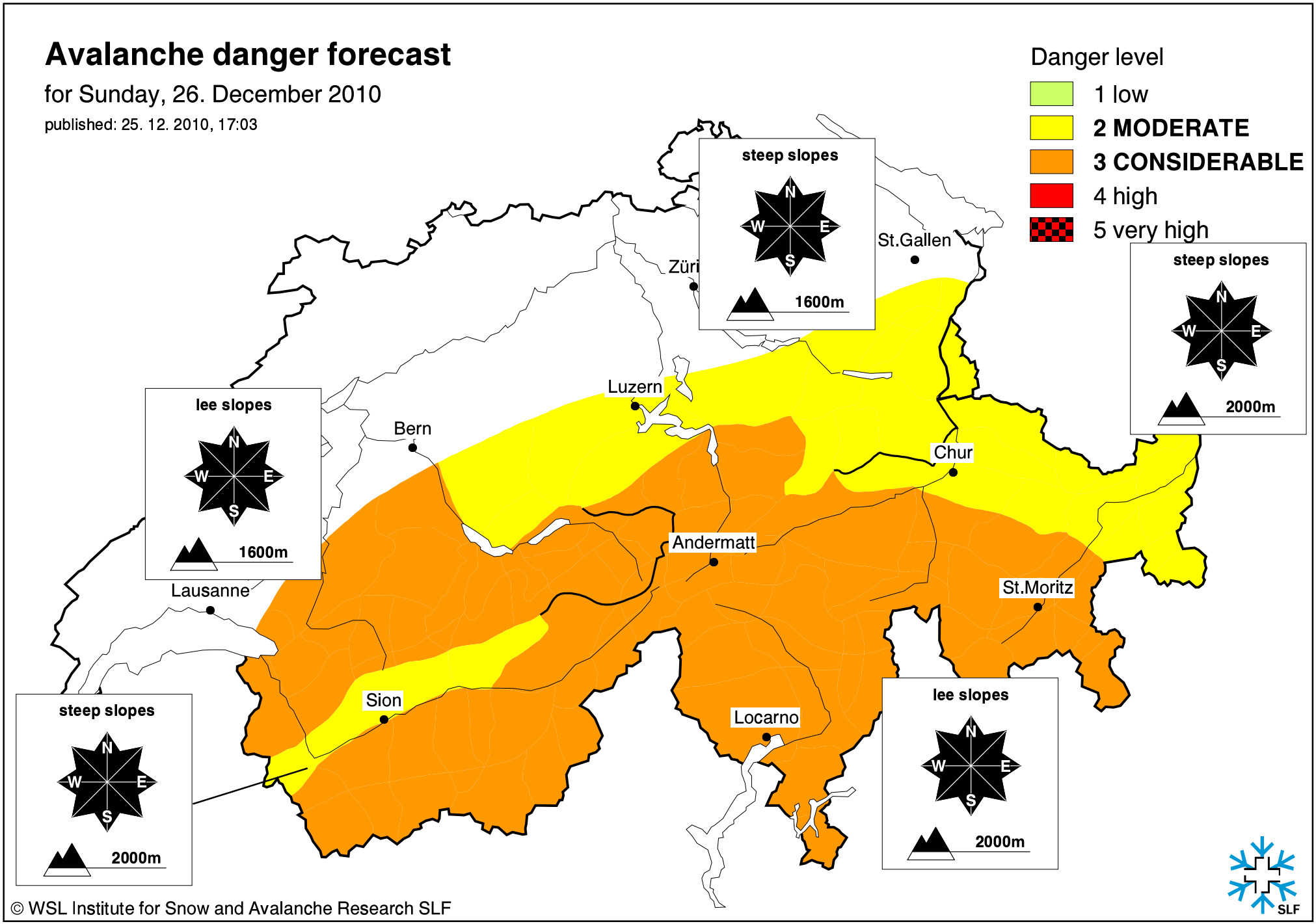
Regional avalanche bulletins (Fr. 0.50/MMS)
LAWZCH Central Switzerland
LAWBVS Lower Valais / VD
LAWOVS Upper Valais
LAWNGR North and Central Grisons
LAWSGR South Grisons
LAWBEO Bernese Oberland
LAWEAN Eastern Part of the Northern Slope of the Alps

Internet: http://www.slf.ch
WAP: wap.slf.ch
Teletext: Page 782 (SF DRS)
Phone: 187 (Fr. 0.50/call and min)
Feedback information:
Email: lwp@slf.ch
Free phone/fax: 0800 800 187 / 88

Avalanche danger forecast

for Sunday, 26. December 2010

published: 25. 12. 2010, 17:03



Avalanche danger forecast

for Sunday, 26. December 2010

published: 26. 12. 2010, 07:40