



National avalanche bulletin no. 59

for Thursday, 6 January 2011

issue date 5.1.2011, 18:30 hours

Escalating avalanche danger particularly in western regions, avoid fresh snowdrift

Current conditions

On Wednesday in central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri, it was predominantly overcast. In all other regions it was sunny. The midday temperatures at 2000 m were minus 3 to minus 6 degrees in northern regions and minus 12 degrees in southern regions. The southwesterly to westerly wind was blowing at moderate velocity on the northern flank of the Alps and in western Lower Valais, elsewhere at light to moderate velocity.

In areas adjacent to ridge lines, small sized snowdrift accumulations are evident from region to region. On wind protected slopes and in regions without much wind, surface hoar covers the uppermost snowpack surface in widespread areas. In the central and eastern parts of the northern flank of the Alps, the surface hoar is blanketed over by a thin layer of new fallen snow. In some places, the snowpack on shady slopes is faceted and loose. The old snowpack shows little tendency towards fracture propagation. However, in central Lower Valais and in the Upper Valais, the snowpack is more prone to triggering than in other regions.

Short-term development

On Thursday in western and in southern regions, it will be heavily overcast. In northern and in eastern regions, it will be variably cloudy, accompanied by bright intervals in the foehn-exposed regions in particular. By Thursday evening a few centimeters of snowfall is expected widespread; in the western part of the northern flank of the Alps and in Lower Valais, 10 to 15 cm of fresh fallen snow is anticipated. The snowfall level in northern regions will ascend to 1600 m over the course of the day. The midday temperatures at 2000 m will be plus 1 degree in northern regions and minus 6 degrees in southern regions. The wind will be blowing at strong velocity in northern and in western regions, elsewhere at moderate velocity. The foehn wind will be blowing at strong velocity intermittently in the Alpine valleys.

The new fallen snow and the loosely packed old snow will be transported, leading to the formation of brittle snowdrift accumulations which will be prone to triggering.

Avalanche danger forecast for Thursday

Northern flank of the Alps not including Urseren; Valais:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

On the northern flank of the Alps not including Urseren as well as in the westernmost and northern Lower Valais, the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in western to northern to southern exposition above approximately 2000 m. New fallen snow and snowdrift can be easily triggered. The released avalanches usually remain small sized. Over the course of the day, the frequency and spread of the freshly formed snowdrift accumulations are expected to increase, particularly in those western regions with fresh fallen snow.

In the remaining parts of Valais, the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on steep slopes in western to northern to southeastern exposition above approximately 2200 m. Freshly formed snowdrift accumulations are usually found in areas adjacent to ridge lines, in gullies and in bowls. In addition, the old snowpack is prone to triggering in some places; in isolated cases, avalanches can be easily triggered.

In all regions of this danger level, the fresh snowdrift is easy to recognize and should be avoided whenever possible. In addition, a prudent route selection is important, especially on shady slopes.

Urseren; Grisons; Ticino:

Low avalanche danger (Level 1)

Freshly formed, as well as somewhat older snowdrift accumulations have been deposited most frequently in areas adjacent to ridge lines and in pass areas. They should be evaluated with great care. The peril of being swept along and falling should be taken into consideration with each assessment.

In the western regions of precipitation more than anywhere else, moist sluffs are possible in isolated cases below approximately 1500 m.

Trend for Friday and Saturday

On Friday it is expected to be heavily overcast accompanied by light snowfall. The snowfall level will be between 2200 m in western regions and 1200 m in southern regions. On Saturday in southern and western regions, a small amount of snowfall is anticipated. The southwesterly wind will continue to blow strongly. The avalanche danger is expected to increase a bit further from region to region.

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

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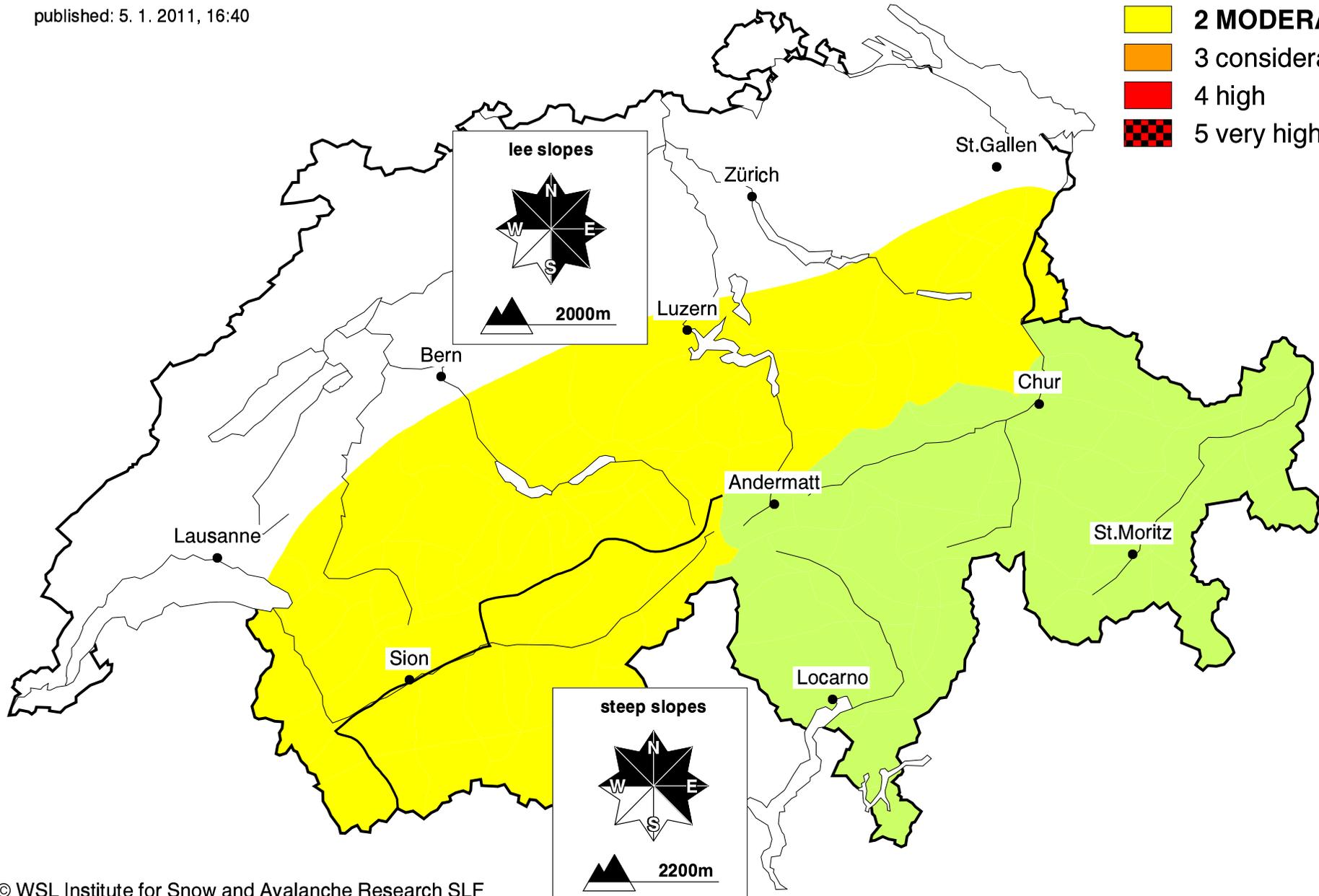
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Danger level

-  **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**

