

National avalanche bulletin no. 75

for Saturday, 22 January 2011

issue date 21.1.2011, 18:30 hours

Considerable avalanche danger in some regions, snowdrift is the major hazard

Current conditions

On Friday in northern regions it was cloudy, accompanied by light snowfall and brief intervals of brightness. In the Valais, in Ticino and in the Engadine, it was predominantly sunny. Between Wednesday morning and Friday afternoon on the northern flank of the Alps from the Schilthorn into the Alpstein region there was 20 to 40 cm of snowfall, locally as much as 50 cm, consisting of very loose snow. On the remaining northern flank of the Alps, in the Lower Valais, in northern and central Grisons, in the Silvretta and in the Samnaun, there was 10 to 20 cm of new fallen snow, elsewhere only a few centimeters. On the southern flank of the Alps, conditions remained dry. The midday temperature on Friday at 2000 m was minus 12 degrees. The gusty northeasterly wind was blowing at moderate strength and transported the loosely packed fresh fallen snow.

Below about 2200 m, the layers of new fallen snow and snowdrift of the last few days have been deposited on top of a rain crust from last week. On steep, south facing slopes, even at high altitudes, this new snowfall has been deposited atop a melt freeze crust. On north facing slopes in particular, small amounts of surface hoar have been blanketed over by fresh fallen snow from place to place. In addition, loosely packed, faceted layers of snow are embedded inside the old snowpack in some areas, particularly in southern Valais and in the inneralpine regions of Grisons.

Short-term development

On Friday night in northern regions, the light snowfall will come to an end. During the day on Saturday, it will be mostly sunny in the Swiss Alps, in eastern regions accompanied by cloudbanks at intermediate altitude. In northern regions there will be high fog extending as high as approximately 1600 to 1900 m. The midday temperatures at 2000 m will be between minus 10 degrees in northwestern regions and minus 14 degrees in southeastern regions. The northeasterly wind will be blowing at moderate velocity.

Avalanche danger forecast for Saturday

Northern flank of the Alps from the Schilthorn to the Walensee:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all expositions above approximately 2000 m.

Particularly the snowdrift from the last few days can be triggered even by a single backcountry skier. Experience in the assessment of avalanche hazards is necessary.

Remaining regions of the northern flank of the Alps; Valais not including upper valleys of Visp; northern and central Ticino; Grisons:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

In the remaining regions of the northern flank of the Alps, in the Gotthard region not including Urseren, in the central part of the southern flank of the Alps not including Sotto Ceneri as well as from the northern Surselva over Flims-Untervaz into the Prättigau, the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all expositions above approximately 1800 m. The major danger stems from freshly formed, predominantly small sized snowdrift accumulations. They can be easily triggered.

In the Valais not including Obergoms and not including the upper valleys of Visp, additionally in the remaining regions of Grisons, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all expositions above approximately 2400 m. Freshly formed snowdrift accumulations can be easily triggered from place to place. These hazardous zones occur most frequently in areas adjacent to ridge lines, gullies and bowls of southern to western exposition. In addition, avalanches can also fracture in the more deeply embedded, faceted layers of the snowpack in isolated cases. This is particularly the case on slopes of western to northern to eastern exposition.

In all regions of this danger level, a cautious route selection is important. The snowdrift accumulations which have formed over the last few days should be avoided whenever possible.

Upper valleys of Visp; Sotto Ceneri:

Low avalanche danger (Level 1)

Isolated avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily in extremely steep areas adjacent to ridge lines, gullies and bowls. The danger of being swept along and falling should be taken into consideration.

Trend for Sunday and Monday

On Sunday it is expected to be predominantly sunny, although during the afternoon in northern regions, it will turn increasingly overcast. On Monday in northern regions, some snowfall is anticipated; in southern regions it will be sunny, accompanied by northerly winds. The avalanche danger is expected to subside. On Monday, the danger level may rise slightly from region to region.

National avalanche bulletin as an MMS (Fr. 0.50/MMS)

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LAWINE overview of the keywords
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LAWOVS Upper Valais
LAWNGR North and Central Grisons
LAWSGR South Grisons
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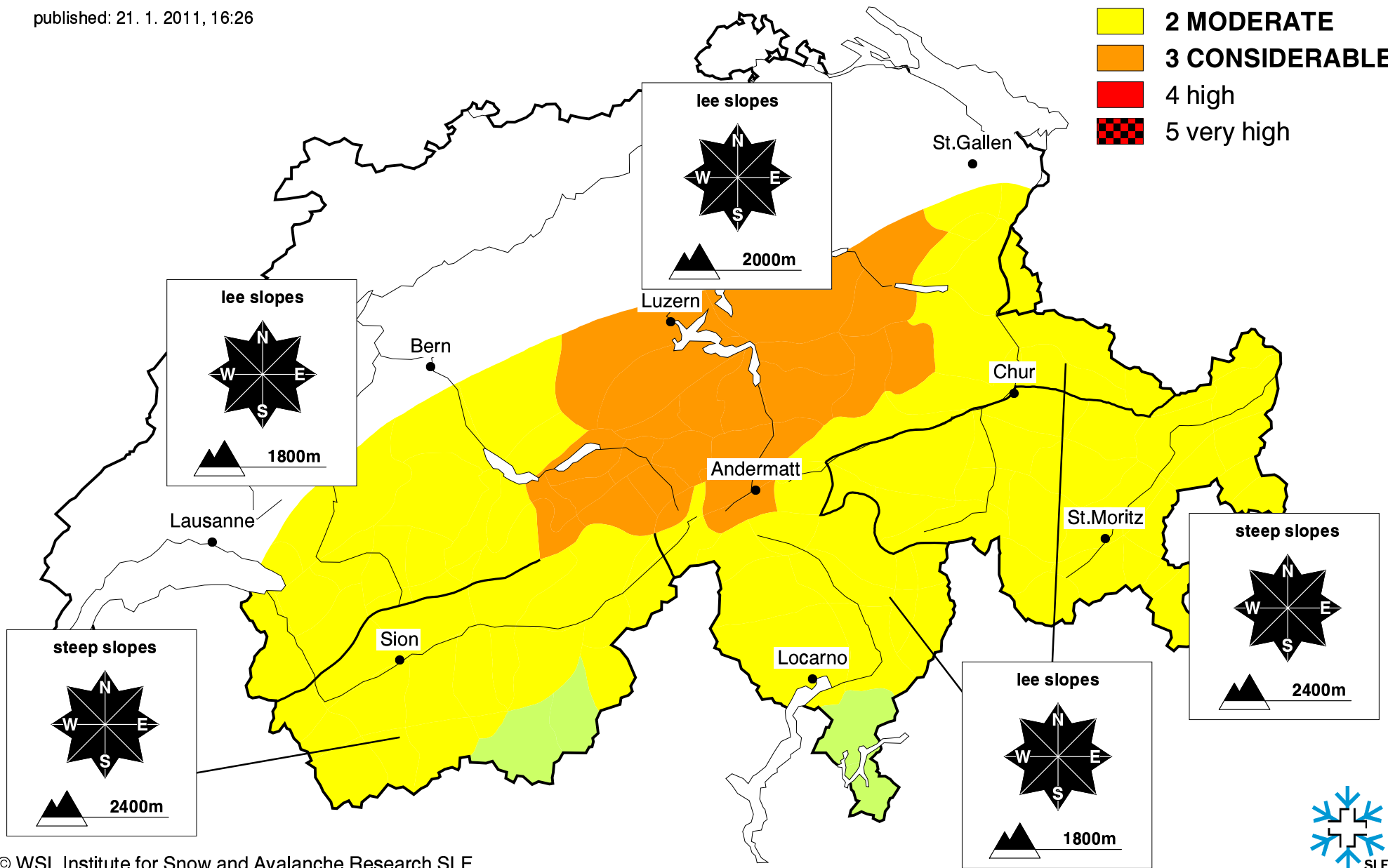
Avalanche danger forecast

for Saturday, 22. January 2011

published: 21. 1. 2011, 16:26

Danger level

-  **1 LOW**
-  **2 MODERATE**
-  **3 CONSIDERABLE**
-  **4 high**
-  **5 very high**








Avalanche danger forecast

for Saturday, 22. January 2011

published: 22. 1. 2011, 07:41

Danger level

-  **1 LOW**
-  **2 MODERATE**
-  **3 CONSIDERABLE**
-  **4 high**
-  **5 very high**

