

National avalanche bulletin no. 103

for Saturday, 19 February 2011

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Amidst northwesterly winds in southern regions, both moderate and considerable avalanche danger levels

Current conditions

On Friday in the Valais and on the southern flank of the Alps, it was sunny; in the remaining regions it was generally overcast for the most part. The midday temperature at 2000 m was minus 3 degrees. The wind shifted during the night from southerly to northerly and was blowing at light to moderate strength; winds were strongest in the Gotthard high alpine regions. The loosely packed fresh fallen snow of the last few days on the Main Alpine Ridge and southwards therefrom has been transported partially onto east and south facing slopes, particularly as of this afternoon. In the remaining regions, the snowpack surface far and wide has been heavily influenced by wind and sun, and is hard compacted. It is loosely packed primarily in shady areas and in wind protected zones.

Short-term development

On Friday night, the skies are expected to clear up throughout the Swiss Alps. On Saturday morning, it will be sunny in the mountains. Later on, clouds will move in from the west. The midday temperature at 2000 m will be minus 2 degrees. The northwesterly wind will be blowing at light to moderate strength, also reaching strong velocity at high altitudes. More than anywhere else in the regions where precipitation was heaviest on the Main Alpine Ridge and southwards therefrom, the size and frequency of the snowdrift accumulations can be expected to increase.

Avalanche danger forecast for Saturday

Southern Simplon region; northern Ticino; Val Calanca; Val Moesa; Bergell:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all expositions above approximately 2200 m. In those places where snowdrift has been deposited on top of loosely packed old snow, avalanches can be triggered even by a single backcountry skier or freerider. The snowdrift accumulations on north facing slopes have to some extent been lightly covered over, making them more difficult to recognize. On slopes of southern exposition, they are quite visible. In all expositions, they should be avoided whenever possible. In outlying terrain away from secured ski runs, general caution and experience in the assessment of avalanche hazards are imperative.

Remaining Main Alpine Ridge from the upper Saastal to the Bernina Pass; central Ticino; Sotto Ceneri; Upper Engadine; Puschlav; Ofen Pass; Münstertal:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all expositions above approximately 2400 m. The treacherous snowdrift accumulations are to be found most frequently in areas adjacent to ridge lines, in gullies and in bowls. These snowdrift accumulations can be easily triggered from place to place. A prudent route selection is important.

Northern flank of the Alps not including the Gotthard region; remaining regions of Valais; remaining regions of Grisons:

Low avalanche danger (Level 1)

Isolated avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on relatively shady, wind protected slopes in extremely steep terrain. These hazardous zones tend to occur somewhat more frequently with ascending altitude.

Trend for Sunday and Monday

On Sunday it will be predominantly overcast. Over the course of the day, snowfall will set in, beginning in the western regions. On Monday over the course of the day, the precipitation will gradually taper off. The avalanche danger will not change significantly in southern regions; in northern regions it is expected to escalate.

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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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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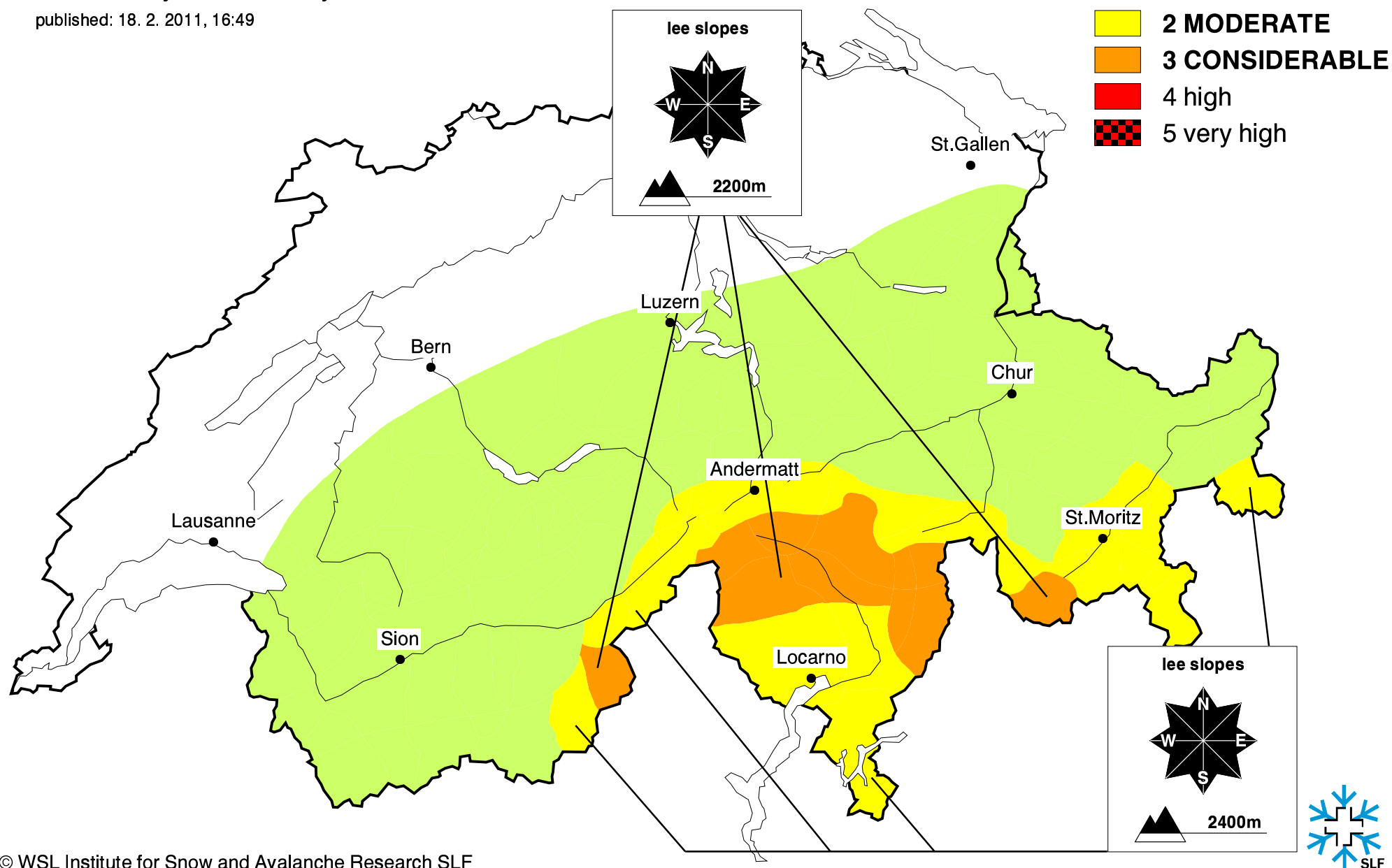
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Danger level

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

