

National avalanche bulletin no. 28

for Friday, 23 December 2011

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Critical avalanche situation widespread, accompanied by snowfall and warmth

Current conditions

On Thursday there was snowfall; only in the furthest southern regions were there bright intervals. Between Tuesday morning and Thursday evening on the northern flank of the Alps from the Bernese Oberland to Liechtenstein, in the Gotthard region and in northern Grisons there was 60 to 100 cm of snowfall; in the Glarner Alps as much as 120 cm. Elsewhere there was 30 to 60 cm of new fallen snow widespread; in central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri, in the Engadine south of the Inn River and in the southern valleys of Grisons, markedly less fresh fallen snow. On Thursday the snowfall level ascended to approximately 1800 m in western regions, towards 1200 m in eastern regions. In the Alpine valleys of eastern regions it generally snowed down to the valley floor. The wind was blowing at moderate to strong velocity from the northwest.

Particularly in northern and eastern regions where snowfall was heaviest, the deep layers of new fallen snow and snowdrift are instable. From southern Upper Valais over northern Ticino into the Bernina region above approximately 2500 m, the lowermost layers of the snowpack are faceted and inadequately consolidated in places.

Short-term development

After midnight, the snowfall will slacken off in northern regions. By Friday morning on the northern flank of the Alps from the eastern Bernese Oberland into Liechtenstein and in the Prättigau, an additional 20 to 40 cm of snowfall is anticipated, from place to place even more. From the western Bernese Oberland over the Gotthard region to northern and central Grisons, 10 to 20 cm of fresh fallen snow is expected, elsewhere less. The snowfall level will be at 1900 m in western regions, at 1000 to 1500 m in eastern regions. On Friday in northern regions it will turn increasingly sunny, in southern regions it will be predominantly so, and very mild. The midday temperatures at 2000 m will be plus 5 degrees in western regions, plus 1 degree in eastern regions. The northwesterly wind will be blowing at moderate velocity.

Avalanche danger forecast for Friday

Northern Alpine Ridge from Wildstrubel to Liechtenstein; southern Obergoms; southern Urseren; northern Grisons:

High avalanche danger (Level 4)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes of all expositions above approximately 2000 m. Increasingly frequent naturally triggered avalanches can be expected. These can even attain large size and place exposed transportation routes at risk. Due to the significant rise in temperatures and the solar radiation, naturally triggered avalanches can even be expected after the precipitation has come to an end. In outlying terrain away from secured ski runs, the greatest possible caution and restraint are called for.

Remaining northern flank of the Alps; remaining Valais; northern Ticino; central Grisons not including northern Tavetsch; Engadine:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects above approximately 1800 m. Avalanches can be triggered even by a single backcountry skier or freerider. Particularly in those regions bordering the regions with "high" avalanche danger, naturally triggered avalanches are possible. Due to the markedly higher temperatures and solar radiation, they can be triggered at any time throughout the day. In isolated cases the avalanches can attain large size and endanger exposed sectors of transportation routes. Extensive experience in evaluating avalanche dangers is imperative when skiing and freeriding in outlying terrain away from secured ski runs.

Central Ticino; Sotto Ceneri; southern valleys of Grisons:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all expositions above approximately 1800 m. Both freshly formed and older snowdrift accumulations should be assessed critically. A cautious route selection is important.

In all regions of the Swiss Alps, but particularly in the regions with heaviest snowfall along the northern flank of the Alps, in the Valais and in northern Grisons, full depth snowslides and full depth avalanches can be expected increasingly frequently below about 2400 m, due to the warmth and rainfall. They can be released with particular ease on steep, grassy slopes and roadside embankments. Due to the massive amounts of snow, they can attain dangerous size and endanger local transportation routes.

Trend for Saturday and Sunday

On Friday night, temperatures will drop noticeably. In northern regions there will be snowfall down to the lowlands. In southern regions it will remain generally sunny. On Sunday, it will be predominantly sunny. The avalanche danger is expected to recede.

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>

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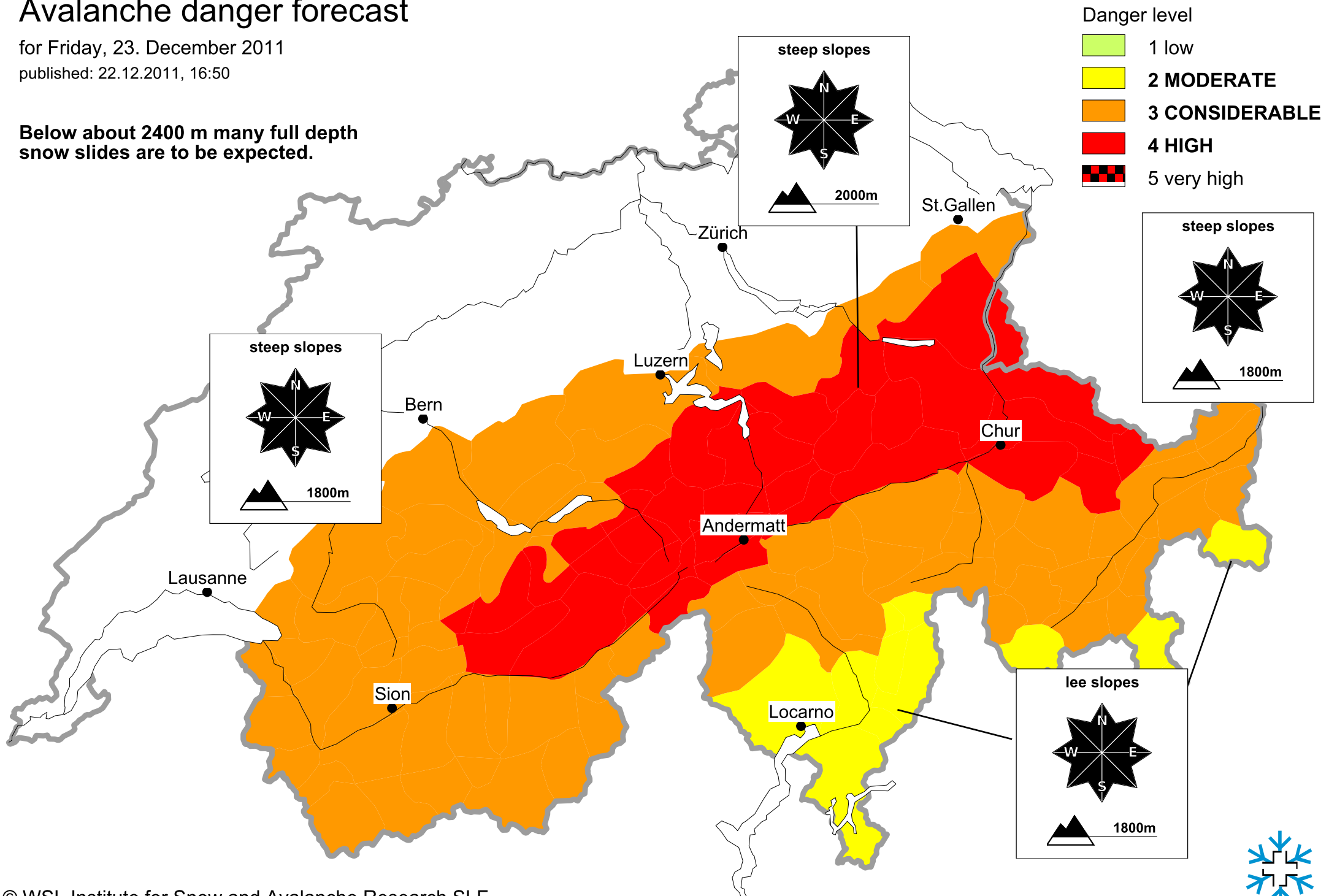
Free phone/fax: 0800 800 187 / 88

Avalanche danger forecast

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Below about 2400 m many full depth snow slides are to be expected.



Avalanche danger forecast

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Below about 2200 m many full depth snow slides are to be expected.

