

National avalanche bulletin no. 37

for Sunday, 1 January 2012

issue date 31.12.2011, 18:30 hours

High avalanche danger in northern regions, increased moist snow avalanches at intermediate altitudes

Current conditions

On Saturday the cloud cover was heavy and there was intermittently intense snowfall in northern regions. Between Friday evening and Saturday afternoon there was 30 to 50 cm of snowfall widespread above 1000 m. In central Ticino, Sotto Ceneri, in the Upper Engadine and in the southern valleys of Grisons there was 5 to 20 cm of new fallen snow. Since Thursday on the northern flank of the Alps and in the Valais, there has been 50 to 80 cm, in the Gotthard region as much as 100 cm of fresh fallen snow. In northern and central Grisons, in the Lower Engadine and in remaining northern Ticino, there has been 30 to 50 cm of snowfall; in the Upper Engadine, in central Ticino and in Sotto Ceneri, 5 to 30 cm of new fallen snow. In northern regions on Saturday, the snowfall level rose over the course of the day to 1600 to 1800 m. On the northern flank of the Alps, in the Valais and in Grisons, the northwesterly wind was blowing at moderate to strong velocity, elsewhere at moderate strength. At high altitudes, the new fallen snow was transported, leading to the formation of deep snowdrift accumulations even far distant from ridgelines.

On north facing slopes more than anywhere else, the snow which has fallen over the last few days has been deposited on top of a loosely packed surface of old snow in some places, or even on top of a layer of surface hoar. Particularly on the Main Alpine Ridge and in the Engadine on north facing slopes above approximately 2500 m, faceted and trigger sensitive layers are evident inside the snowpack near the ground.

Short-term development

During the night of New Year's Eve, the precipitation will move towards the east and ease off. On the northern flank of the Alps from the eastern Bernese Oberland to Liechtenstein, as well as from Prättigau to Samnaun, 10 to 20 cm of snowfall is anticipated above approximately 2000 m, elsewhere less. On New Year's Day, it will be quite sunny in southern regions. In northern regions it is expected to turn increasingly sunny. The temperatures at midday will be zero to plus 2 degrees at 2000 m. The wind will be blowing at moderate to strong velocity in northern regions, at light to moderate velocity in southern regions, from westerly directions. Over the course of the day, the wind will slacken off.

Through the rainfall, the snowpack at low and intermediate altitudes will be weakened.

Avalanche danger forecast for New Year's Day

Northern Alpine Ridge; Obergoms; Urseren; Bedretto; northern Prättigau; Silvretta; Samnaun:

High avalanche danger (Level 4)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects above approximately 1800 m. Particularly during the night of New Year's Eve, increasingly frequent naturally triggered avalanches can be expected. These can attain medium size, to some extent even large size, and place exposed transportation routes at risk. In outlying terrain away from secured ski runs, restraint and the highest possible degree of caution are called for.

Remaining regions of northern flank of the Alps; remaining regions of Valais, Grisons and of northern Ticino; central Ticino:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects. In the indicated regions of the northern flank of the Alps, the danger zones lie above approximately 1600 m, elsewhere above approximately 2000 m. The preeminent danger stems from the layers of new fallen snow and drifted snow of the last few days. They can be easily triggered. Naturally triggered avalanches are possible. In outlying terrain away from secured ski runs, extensive experience in evaluating avalanche dangers is imperative.

Sotto Ceneri:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all aspects above approximately 1800 m. The snowdrift accumulations from the last few days are trigger sensitive, but generally small sized. They should be evaluated with great care.

In all regions of the Swiss Alps, moist snow avalanches and full depth snowslides can be expected below about 1800 m on steep, grassy slopes and on road embankments in all aspects. Exposed sections of transportation routes are endangered.

Trend for Monday and Tuesday

On Monday, precipitation is expected to set in from the west. The snowfall level will drop down to low altitudes. The precipitation is expected to persist until Tuesday morning, subsequently the skies will brighten up. The danger of naturally triggered avalanches will recede. For backcountry skiing and freeriding tours in outlying terrain away from secured ski runs, the situation will nonetheless remain treacherous. As the temperatures decrease on Monday, the danger of moist snow avalanches is expected to subside.

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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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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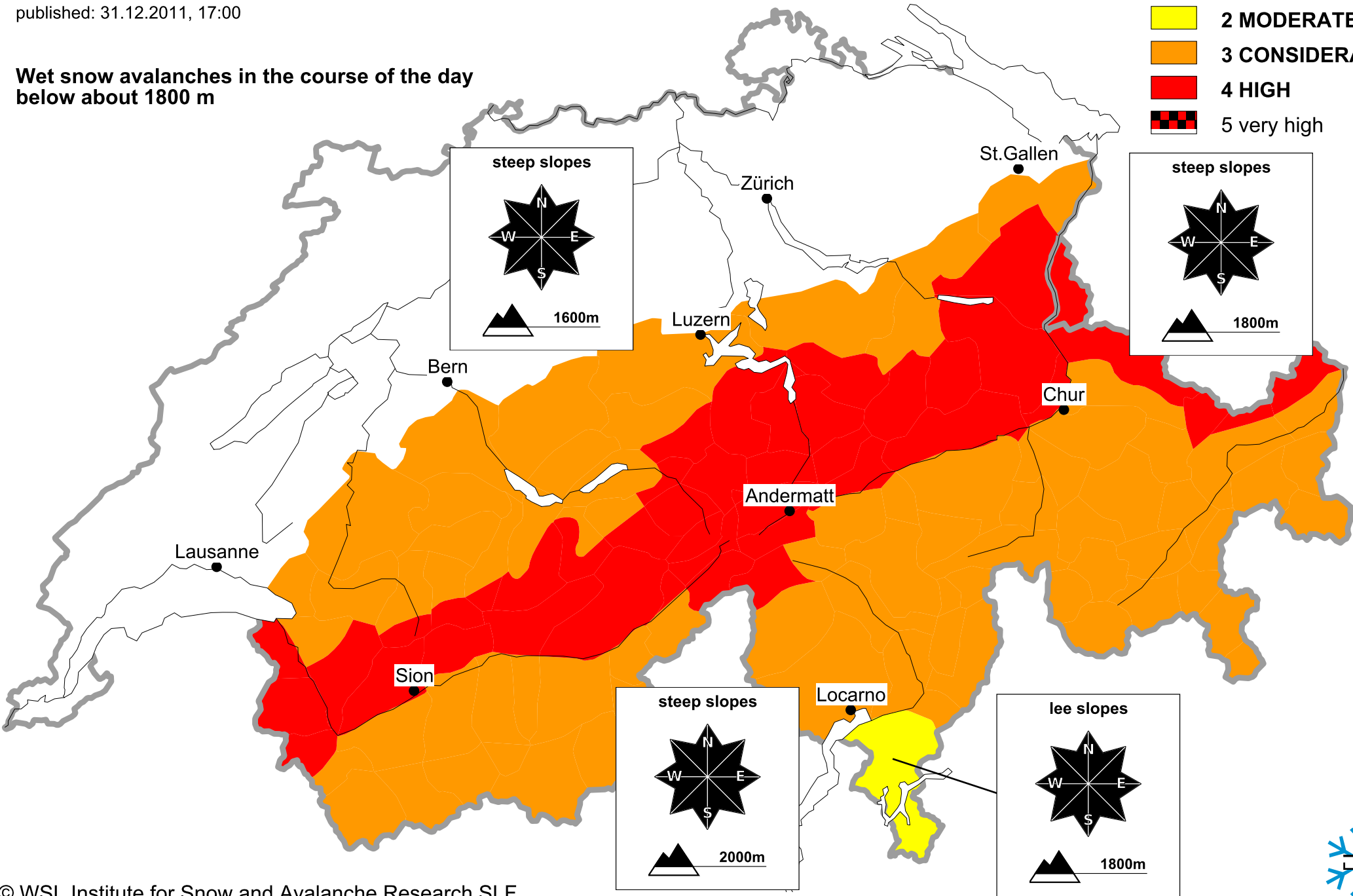
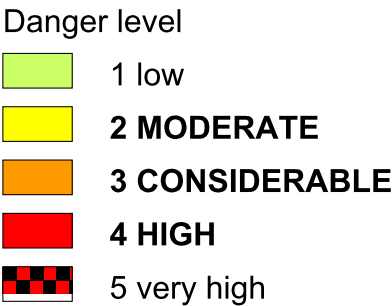
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Avalanche danger forecast

for Sunday, 1. January 2012

published: 31.12.2011, 17:00

Wet snow avalanches in the course of the day
below about 1800 m



Avalanche danger forecast

for Sunday, 1. January 2012

published: 1.1.2012, 08:04

Wet snow avalanches and full depth
snowslides below about 1800 to 2000 m

Danger level

- 1 low
- 2 MODERATE
- 3 CONSIDERABLE
- 4 HIGH
- 5 very high

