

National avalanche bulletin no. 43

for Saturday, 7 January 2012

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High avalanche danger widespread

Current conditions

Since the beginning of this period of precipitation on Wednesday night, there has been 50 to 80 cm of snowfall widespread in the central and eastern parts of the northern flank of the Alps, in the Gotthard region, in northern Grisons and in the Samnaun; in the remaining regions, 20 to 50 cm. Only in the southern valleys of Grisons and in Sotto Ceneri was there less than 20 cm of new fallen snow. The amounts of fresh fallen snow were highly varied from region to region. On Friday at midday, the snowfall gradually slackened off in western regions. The midday temperature at 2000 m was about minus 9 degrees. The stormy northerly wind transported new fallen and old snow intensively. Far ranging snowdrift accumulations have been formed. The bonding between the various layers of new fallen and drifted snow is poor widespread and avalanches can be easily triggered. Particularly on the Main Alpine Ridge and in the Engadine on shady slopes above 2500 m, faceted and weak layers are evident inside the snowpack near the ground.

Short-term development

On Friday night, the precipitation is expected to slacken off and bright intervals will follow. Over the course of the day on Saturday, snowfall will again set in widespread. By evening in the central and eastern parts of the northern flank of the Alps, in northern Grisons and in the Samnaun, 10 to 30 cm of snowfall is anticipated; in the remaining regions, about 10 cm or less. The midday temperature at 2000 m will be minus 5 degrees. The northerly wind will be blowing at strong to storm velocity, thus continuing to give rise to wide ranging snowdrift accumulations. Fractures at deeply embedded points inside the snowpack can be expected as the massive weight of the snow atop the snowpack surface increases, particularly on the Main Alpine Ridge and in the Engadine. This can also not be excluded in the remaining regions.

Avalanche danger forecast for Saturday

Northern Alpine Ridge; Valais not including southern Simplon region; Gotthard region; northern Grisons; Domleschg - Lenzerheide, Albulatal; Zuzo; St. Moritz; Lower Engadine:

High avalanche danger (Level 4)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects over approximately 2000 m. Avalanches are triggered naturally or can be easily triggered even by a single backcountry skier or freerider. Avalanches often attain medium, in isolated cases even large size. They can advance downwards to areas below 2000 m and place exposed transportation routes at risk. The conditions for backcountry skiing and freeriding tours in outlying terrain away from secured ski runs are very critical. All those without extensive experience in evaluating avalanche dangers should remain on the ski runs which have been secured.

Remaining parts of northern flank of the Alps, of central Grisons, of northern Ticino and of the Upper Engadine; southern Simplon region; central Ticino; southern valleys of Grisons; Jura:

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 are found above approximately 1600 m, in the remaining regions of this danger level, excluding the Jura, they are above approximately 1800 m. Snowdrift accumulations can be easily triggered even by a single backcountry skier or freerider. Naturally triggered avalanches are anticipated which can attain medium size. For backcountry tours in outlying terrain away from secured ski runs, the situation is critical. A high degree of caution and extensive experience in evaluating avalanche danger are imperative.

In addition, on the Main Alpine Ridge and in the Upper Engadine, more than anywhere else, on shady slopes above approximately 2500 m, avalanches can be triggered even in deeply embedded layers inside the snowpack. These avalanche prone locations are difficult to recognize.

In the Jura, snowdrift accumulations above approximately 1400 m, more than anything else, have to be assessed with great care.

In all regions of the Swiss Alps below about 2000 m, full depth snowslides are possible.

Trend for Sunday and Monday

On Sunday, particularly in the central and eastern parts of the northern flank of the Alps, in northern Grisons and in the Lower Engadine, intense precipitation can once again be expected, accompanied by storm velocity northwesterly winds. On Monday, light snowfall is still anticipated in northern regions; in southern regions it will be quite sunny. The avalanche situation will remain tense.

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

Internet: <http://www.slf.ch>

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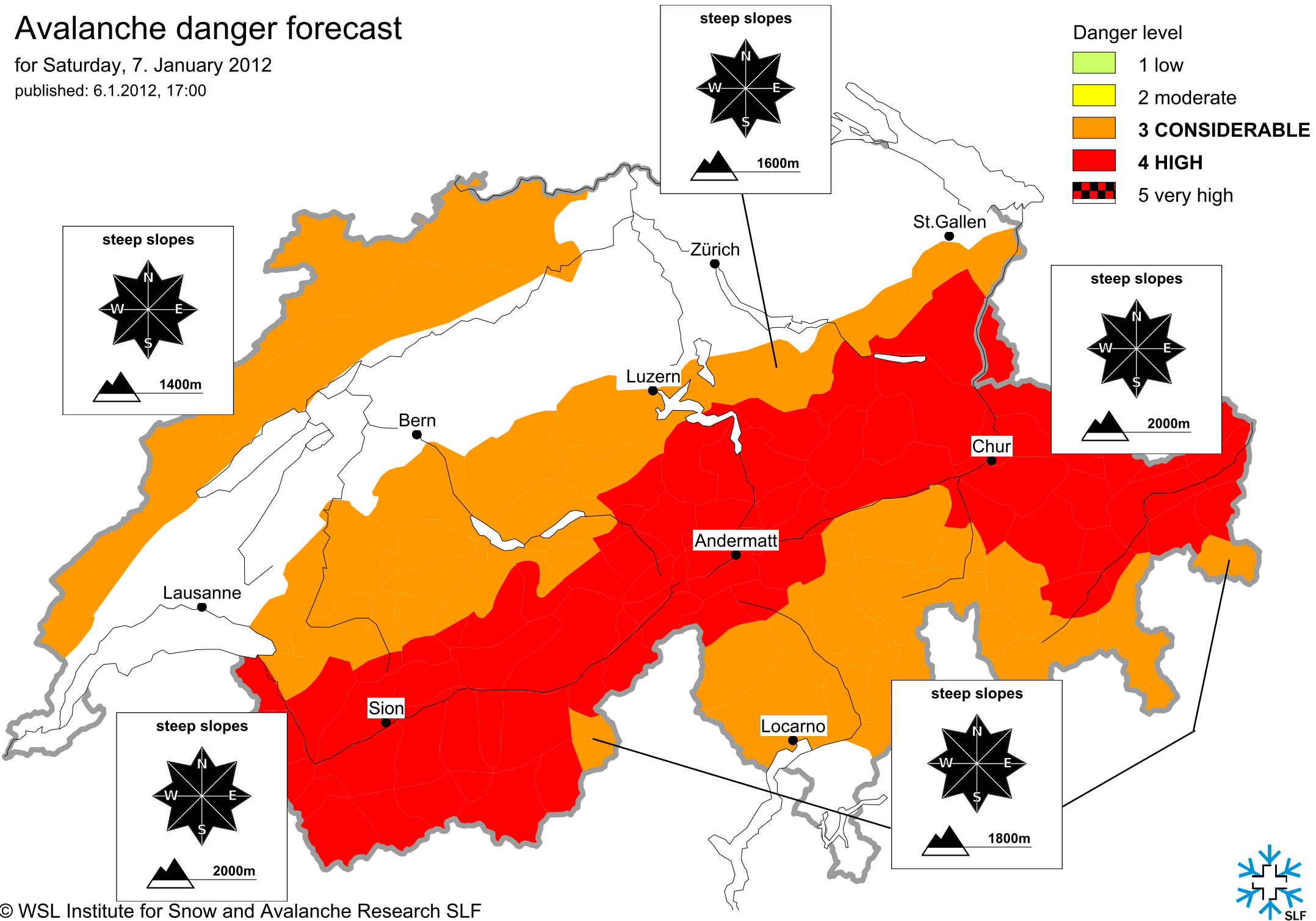
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