



National avalanche bulletin no. 79

for Sunday, 12 February 2012

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Caution urged towards fresh snowdrift - considerable avalanche danger widespread

Current conditions

On Saturday it was predominantly sunny above approximately 2000 m, despite high altitude clouds in southern regions in particular. The midday temperature at 2000 m was minus 14 degrees. The northeasterly wind was blowing at generally moderate velocity. Along the Prealps, winds were strong in places and transported the old snow. Freshly formed and older snowdrift accumulations are prone to triggering in some places. In its more deeply embedded layers, the snowpack is favourably structured by and large. The deep snowpack tends to insulate the ground. Full depth avalanches continue to be possible in isolated cases.

Short-term development

On Sunday it will be predominantly sunny in the Swiss Alps. The midday temperature at 2000 m will be minus 14 degrees. The northeasterly wind will be blowing at moderate strength; at high altitudes and along the western sector of the Prealps, winds will also reach strong velocity.

Avalanche danger forecast for Sunday

Western Prealps; southern Upper Valais; Aletsch region; central part of Main Alpine Ridge; northern and central Grisons; Engadine; Bergell; Münstertal:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all aspects. In the western Prealps the danger zones are above approximately 1600 m; in the remaining regions of this danger level they are above approximately 2400 m. Snowdrift accumulations have often been deposited in spots where the slope gradient changes abruptly, or in gullies and bowls. They can be easily triggered in some places and should be circumvented whenever possible.

Whumpfung sounds and shooting cracks can be indicators of imminent avalanche danger. In outlying terrain away from secured ski runs, experience in evaluating the avalanche hazards is essential.

Northern flank of the Alps not including the western Prealps and not including the Gotthard region; in addition, Lower Valais; Lötschental; regions south of the central part of the Main Alpine Ridge; Puschlav:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all aspects. In the indicated regions of the northern flank of the Alps, the danger zones are above approximately 1800 m; in the remaining regions of this danger level, they are above approximately 2200 m. Snowdrift accumulations are frequently to be found in places where the slope gradient abruptly changes, or in gullies and bowls. The drifted masses should be assessed with great care. Whumpfung sounds and shooting cracks when stepping onto the snowpack can be indicators of imminent avalanche danger. The avalanche prone locations tend to be more prevalent in the Prealps and generally become more frequent with ascending altitude. A cautious route selection is important.

On the Main Alpine Ridge and northwards thereof, more than anywhere else, below about 2400 m on west to south to east facing slopes, full depth snowslides are possible in isolated cases. These slides can reach medium size. In isolated cases, exposed sections of transportation routes can be placed at risk. Caution is urged below glide cracks in the snowpack.

Trend for Monday and Tuesday

On Monday, clouds will move in from the north during the course of the day. On Tuesday, a small amount of snowfall is expected in northern regions. In southern regions it will be sunny on both days, accompanied by northerly winds. It will be a little less cold. The avalanche danger will subside only incrementally. Snowdrift remains the major peril. Full depth snowslides will continue to be possible.

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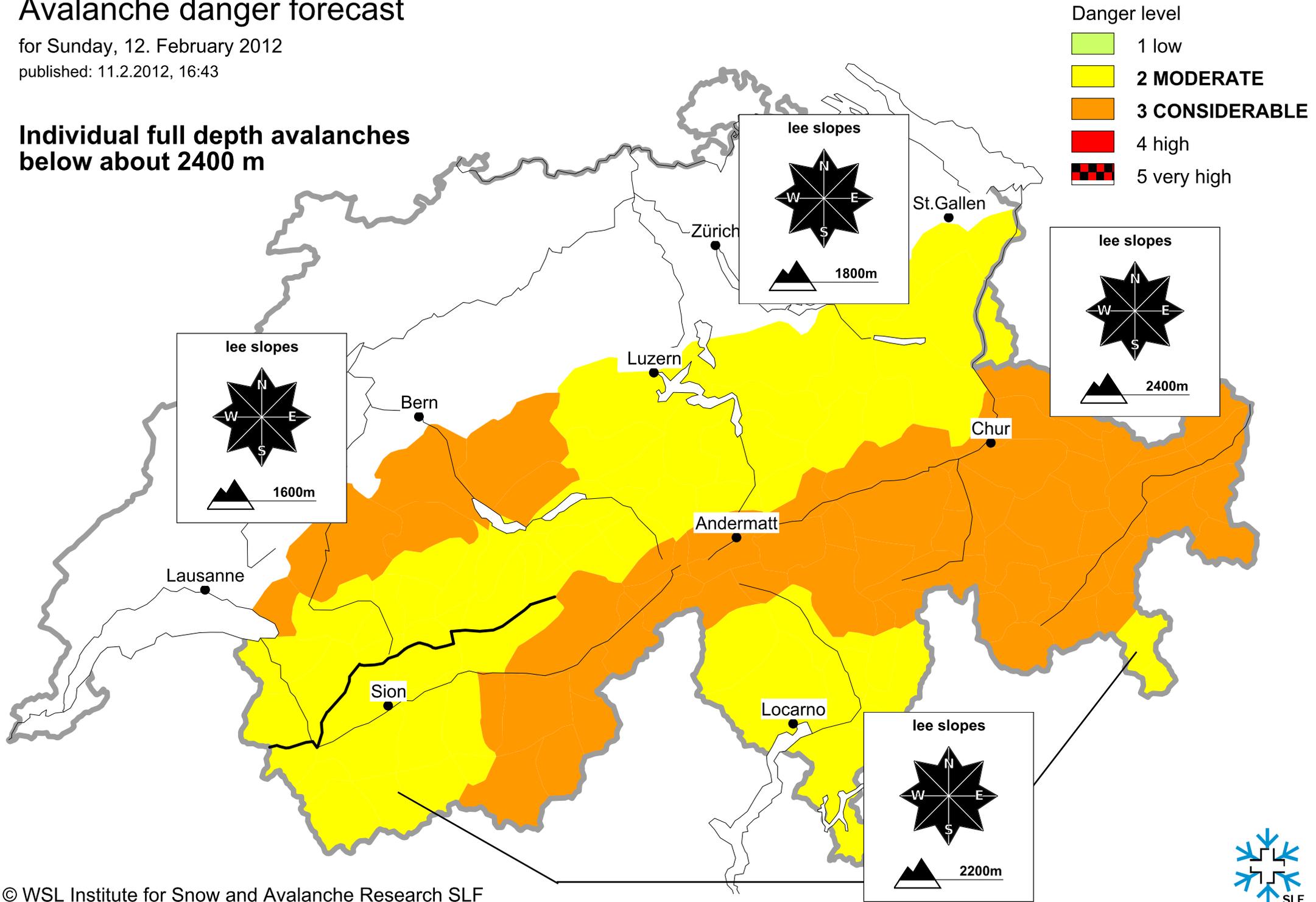
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Avalanche danger forecast

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Individual full depth avalanches below about 2400 m



Avalanche danger forecast

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Individual full depth avalanches below about 2400 m

