

## National avalanche bulletin no. 85

for Saturday, 18 February 2012

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### *Treacherous avalanche situation - considerable danger widespread*

#### Current conditions

On Friday in northeastern regions it was partly overcast, elsewhere generally sunny. The wind was blowing at light to moderate velocity from northwesterly directions. The midday temperatures at 2000 m were between zero and minus two degrees in northern regions and at plus 3 degrees in southern regions. Under the influence of solar radiation and the daytime warming cycle, the likelihood of avalanches being triggered increased during the course of the day.

Fresh fallen and drifted snow have been deposited atop a snowpack surface which is either hard and heavily impacted by winds or on top of an old snowpack which is faceted and, in some places, loosely packed. Particularly in the zone near the treeline or at intermediate and high altitudes of the inneralpine regions widespread, the new fallen snow and snowdrift can be very easily triggered.

Wherever the snowpack is deep, its lowermost layers are generally solid and stable. Full depth snowslides continue to be possible in isolated cases.

#### Short-term development

On Saturday it will be predominantly sunny. The midday temperature at 2000 m will be minus 1 degree. The wind will shift from westerly to southwesterly and be blowing at generally light velocity.

#### Avalanche danger forecast for Saturday

Northern flank of the Alps; Valais not including southern Simplon region; central part of Main Alpine Ridge; Grisons not including the regions Lower Val Calanca and Lower Val Moesa:

##### *Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)*

In the central part of the northern flank of the Alps not including Urseren and in the eastern part of the northern flank of the Alps, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects above approximately 1600 m; in the western part of the northern flank of the Alps the danger zones are above approximately 1800 m. In western Lower Valais, in northern Valais, in the central part of the Main Alpine Ridge, in northern and central Grisons, in the Lower Engadine and in Münstertal, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects above approximately 2000 m. Avalanches can be easily triggered even by a single backcountry skier or freerider. Remote triggerings, well outside the starting zone, are possible. In outlying terrain away from secured ski runs, the avalanche situation is delicate and treacherous. The avalanche prone locations are barely discernible. A great deal of experience in evaluating avalanche dangers and restraint are essential.

In southern Valais from Val d'Hérens into the valleys of Visp, in the northern Simplon region as well as in the Upper Engadine, in Bergell and in Puschlav, the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all aspects above approximately 2000 m. Snowdrift accumulations can be easily triggered in some places and should be circumvented. Experience in assessing avalanche hazards is essential.

In all regions of this danger level, particularly on steep, south facing slopes, the avalanche hazards are subject to a daytime cycle. The likelihood of avalanches being triggered is somewhat lesser in early morning, but subsequently escalates in line with the daytime warming cycle.

Southern Simplon region; regions south of the central part of the Main Alpine Ridge:

##### *Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)*

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in all aspects above approximately 2000 m. Particularly the snowdrift accumulations which have formed during the last few days should be evaluated with great care.

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 Sunday and Monday

On Sunday in northern regions, snowfall is anticipated. On Monday, the snowfall will slacken off and it will turn increasingly sunny. All in all, approximately 15 to 30 cm of new fallen snow is expected in northern regions. It will turn significantly colder. The avalanche situation is expected to remain tense.

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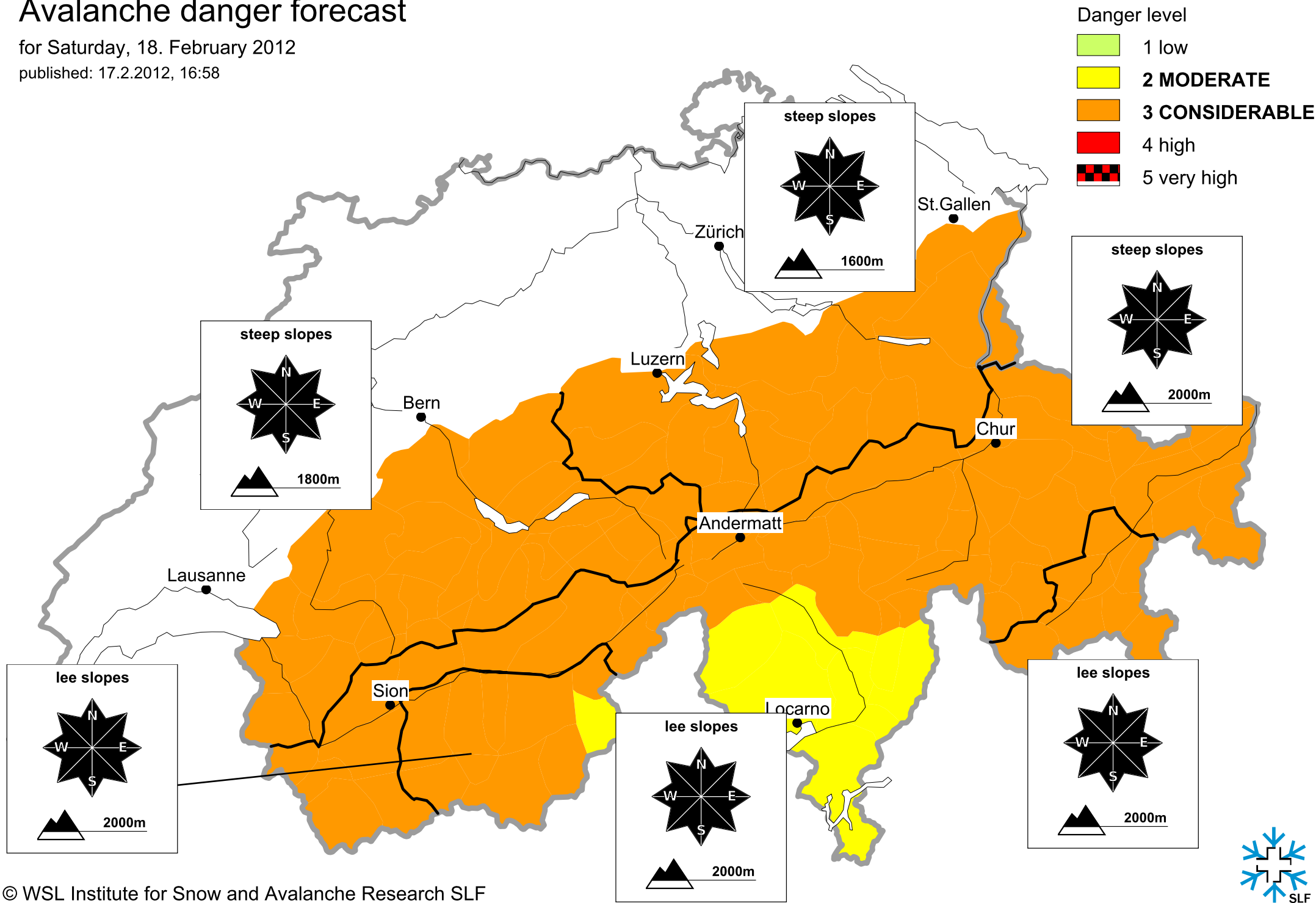
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# Avalanche danger forecast

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