

National avalanche bulletin no. 87

for Monday, 20 February 2012

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Considerable and moderate avalanche danger levels

Current conditions

On Sunday it was generally overcast. In the central and eastern parts of the northern flank of the Alps there was 10 to 15 cm of snowfall; in the western part of the northern flank of the Alps and in northern Grisons, 5 to 10 cm of new fallen snow; elsewhere just a few centimeters. The midday temperatures at 2000 m were minus 4 degrees. The wind in the furthestmost northern regions was blowing at moderate to strong velocity, elsewhere generally at light to moderate strength, from westerly to northwesterly directions. On the northern flank of the Alps in particular, snowdrift accumulations formed anew from place to place.

The fresh fallen and the drifted snow from mid-week has been deposited on top of loosely packed, faceted layers of old snow in some places. In the central and eastern parts of the northern flank of the Alps and in Grisons, the likelihood of avalanches triggering in the zone near the treeline and at altitudes of approximately 500 m further up is quite high. With ascending altitude, the frequency of the avalanche prone locations tends to diminish. In the southern regions, the snowpack has been heavily impacted by winds and in many places is hard. Wherever the snowpack is deep, its lowermost layers are generally solid and stable. Full depth snowslides continue to be expected in isolated cases.

Short-term development

On Sunday night in northeastern regions, a few additional centimeters of snowfall is expected. During the day on Monday, it will be predominantly sunny. The midday temperatures at 2000 m will drop down to minus 12 degrees in northern regions and minus 9 degrees in southern regions. In northern regions, a moderate velocity bise wind will be blowing and fresh snowdrift accumulations will be formed in some places. In the remaining regions, the wind will be generally light.

Avalanche danger forecast for Monday

Prealps; Lake Brienz; Hasliberg - Rosenloui; Guttannen; Gadmortal; central and eastern parts of northern flank of the Alps; northern and central Grisons; Engadine; Val Müstair:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

In the indicated regions of the northern flank of the Alps not including Urseren, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects above approximately 1600 m; in northern Grisons, they are above approximately 2000 m. Avalanches can be triggered even by a single backcountry skier or freerider. The major peril stems from older snowdrift accumulations which, particularly in relatively wind protected places, have been deposited on top of loosely packed old snow. The avalanche prone locations are barely discernible. Furthermore, in the Prealps, more than anywhere else, the freshly formed snowdrift accumulations should be accorded careful evaluation.

In Urseren, in central Grisons, in the Engadine and in the Val Müstair, the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on steep slopes in southwestern to northern to southeastern aspects above approximately 2000 m. Older snowdrift accumulations in particular can be triggered even by a single backcountry skier or freerider in places, but are very difficult to recognize because of the new fallen snow. In all regions of this danger level, experience in evaluating avalanche dangers is imperative.

Western part of the northern flank of the Alps not including Prealps and not including the regions Lake Brienz; Hasliberg - Rosenloui, Guttannen, Gadmortal; in addition, Valais; Ticino; Val Calanca; Val Moesa; Bergell; Puschlav:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on slopes in southwestern to northern to southeastern aspects above approximately 2000 m. In the indicated regions of the western part of the northern flank of the Alps and in the Valais not including the regions of Zermatt, Saas Fee and Simplon, the danger zones are to be found on steep slopes; in the remaining regions of this danger level, they are primarily on wind loaded slopes. More than anything else, the snowdrift accumulations from the last few days should be assessed with great care. In some places the avalanche prone locations are difficult to recognize.

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 Tuesday and Wednesday

It will be predominantly sunny and slowly turn warmer. The avalanche danger is expected to gradually decrease.

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)

Weather Information in collaboration with MeteoSwiss

0900 162 138 / 338 Alpine Weather Report MeteoSwiss phone/fax
(phone: CHF 1.20/min) (fax: CHF 2.--/min)

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>

WAP: wap.slf.ch

Teletext: Page 782 (SF DRS)

Phone: 187 (Fr. 0.90/call and min)

Feedback information:

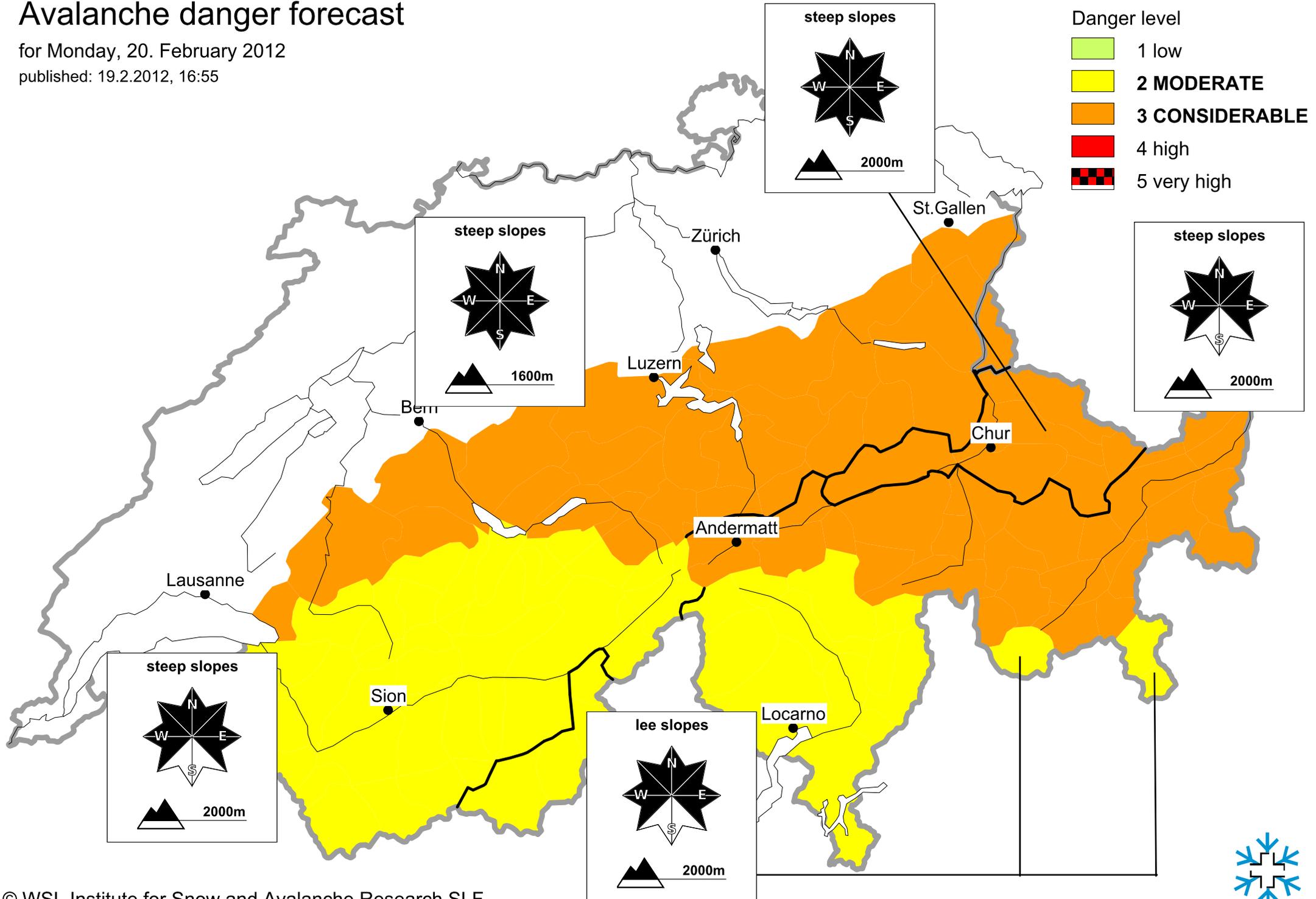
Email: lwp@slf.ch

Free phone/fax: 0800 800 187 / 88

Avalanche danger forecast

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Danger level

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

