

National avalanche bulletin no. 140

for Friday, 13 April 2012

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Snowdrift accumulations are the major peril

Current conditions

On Wednesday night in eastern regions there was an additional few centimeters of snowfall. During the day on Thursday it was quite sunny in eastern regions, elsewhere heavily overcast to an increasing degree. The midday temperature at 2000 m was minus 2 degrees. The wind was blowing at light to moderate strength, in high alpine regions at strong velocity, from the southwest. Freshly drifted snow masses accumulated. The new fallen and newly drifted snow from the last few days has already been triggered as avalanches by individual backcountry skiers and freeriders. These avalanches generally remained small sized, however. In southern Valais and in Grisons more than anywhere else, the old snowpack is faceted and weak to some extent on north facing slopes where the snow is relatively shallow.

Short-term development

On Friday it will be heavily overcast in general. Intermittent snowfall is expected. Between Thursday evening and Friday evening in the western part of the northern flank of the Alps as well as in the central part of the southern flank of the Alps, 10 to 20 cm of snowfall is anticipated. In the remaining regions, only a few centimeters of fresh fallen snow is expected. In northern regions the snowfall level will be at approximately 1200 m, in southern regions at 1500 m. The wind at high altitudes will be blowing at moderate velocity during the night, otherwise at generally light strength, and will shift from southwesterly to northeasterly.

Avalanche danger forecast for Friday

Northern Alpine Ridge west of Susten Pass; southern Simplon region; Main Alpine Ridge from Furka Pass into the Bernina region; in addition, the regions of Bivio, St. Moritz and Val Poschiavo:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in northwestern to northern to eastern aspects above approximately 2600 m. Freshly formed, yet also somewhat older snowdrift accumulations require special attentiveness. They are to some extent blanketed over by new fallen snow and discernible only with difficulty. Their spread and their size tend to increase with ascending altitude. They can be triggered as avalanches even by a single backcountry skier or freerider. Experience in evaluating avalanche hazards is essential.

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

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on steep slopes in western to northern to eastern aspects. In the indicated regions of the northern flank of the Alps and in the regions south of the central part of the Main Alpine Ridge, the danger zones are found above approximately 2000 m. In the remaining regions of this danger level the hazardous zones are found above approximately 2200 m. The uppermost layers of the snowpack can be triggered as an avalanche even by a single backcountry skier or freerider in some places. The released snow masses are usually small, however. The avalanche prone locations are difficult to recognize. A cautious route selection is recommended. In high alpine regions, the avalanche danger must be categorized as higher. Freshly formed snowdrift accumulations in particular should be avoided whenever possible.

Trend for Saturday and Sunday

On Saturday and Sunday, skies will be heavily overcast in general. Intermittent snowfall is anticipated down to intermediate altitudes. The avalanche danger may well increase in some high alpine regions, but elsewhere is not expected to change significantly.

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)

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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

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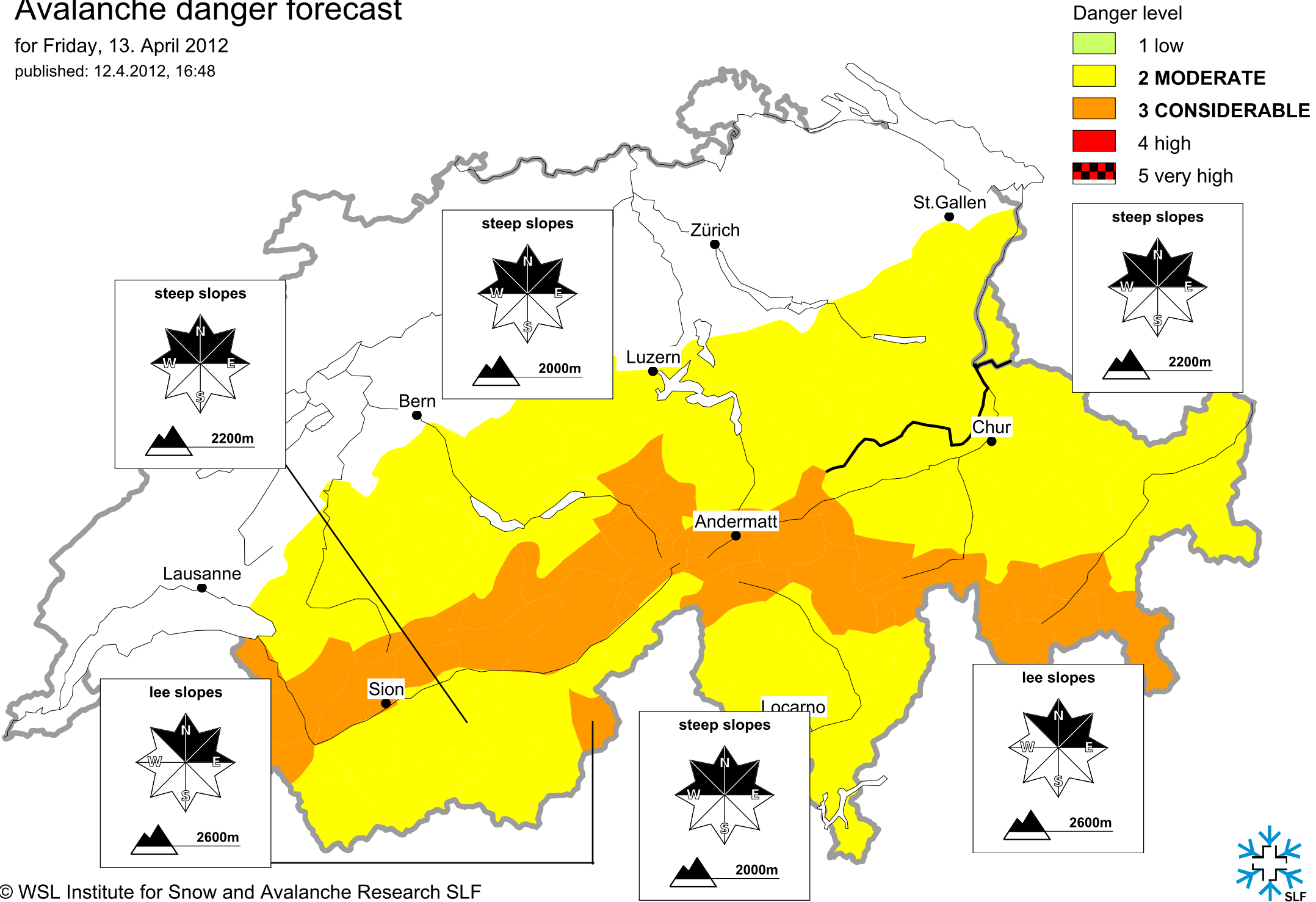
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