

National avalanche bulletin no. 149

for Sunday, 22 April 2012

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Caution urged towards snowdrift accumulations

Current conditions

On Friday night a few centimeters of snow fell. During the day on Saturday it was predominantly sunny to begin with. Over the course of the day, precipitation set in from the northwest. The midday temperature at 2000 m was minus 1 degree. The gusty wind was blowing at moderate to strong velocity from westerly to southwesterly directions.

At high altitudes more than anywhere else, snow was transported. The layers of newly fallen and newly drifted snow are prone to triggering in some places. Particularly in southern Valais and in Grisons, furthermore, the old snowpack on north facing slopes where the snow is relatively shallow is faceted and weak to some extent. In the remaining regions, the more deeply embedded layers of snow are generally stable.

Short-term development

During the night on Saturday and on Sunday morning it will be heavily overcast. By midday on the northern Alpine Ridge and in Grisons, 15 to 30 cm of snowfall is anticipated, elsewhere maximum 15 cm of fresh fallen snow. The snowfall level will be at 1500 m in northern regions, 2000 m in southern regions. On Sunday afternoon there will be bright intervals in the Valais and Ticino in particular. The midday temperatures at 2000 m will be minus 5 degrees in northern regions and zero degrees in southern regions. During the night the wind will be blowing at strong velocity from the southwest in northern regions in particular. During the day, the wind will shift to northwesterly and be blowing predominantly at moderate strength.

Avalanche danger forecast for Sunday

Northern Alpine Ridge; Leysin; Valais; Urseren; northern Ticino; Grisons:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

In the regions of Chablais, Leysin, Villars, Ovronnaz, Trient and Great St. Bernard, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects above approximately 2200 m. More recently formed snowdrift accumulations can be triggered as avalanches by a single backcountry skier or freerider or even release naturally in isolated cases. Avalanches which attain medium size are possible.

In the remaining regions of this danger level the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes in western to northern to southeastern aspects above approximately 2400 m. More recently formed snowdrift accumulations can be triggered even by one single person and should be evaluated with great care.

In all regions of this danger level, experience in the assessment of avalanche hazards is essential.

Regions north of the northern Alpine Ridge not including Leysin; central Ticino; Sotto Ceneri:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

In the regions north of the northern Alpine Ridge not including Leysin, the avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on steep slopes in western to northern to southeastern aspects above approximately 2000 m. In central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects above approximately 2200 m.

Layers of fresh fallen and freshly drifted snow should be assessed with caution. Both the frequency and the size of avalanche prone locations tend to increase with ascending altitude.

In all regions of the Swiss Alps below about 2200 m, isolated full depth avalanches and wet snowslides are possible.

Trend for Monday and Tuesday

On Monday it will be partly sunny and predominantly dry. The avalanche danger will diminish somewhat. On Tuesday the avalanche danger will increase in southern regions in particular, due to snowfall and wind.

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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-- South Grisons
-- Bernese Oberland
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