

National avalanche bulletin no. 150

for Monday, 23 April 2012

issue date 22.4.2012, 18:30 hours

Avalanche danger is considerable widespread

Current conditions

On Sunday skies were overcast, amidst more extensive bright intervals during the afternoon. There was 10 to 20 cm of snowfall widespread; in the furthest western Valais and from Bergell over the Upper Engadine into the Münstertal there was as much as 40 cm of new fallen snow. The midday temperatures at 2000 m were minus 4 degrees in northern regions, zero degrees in southern regions. The wind shifted from southwesterly to westerly and was blowing at moderate to strong velocity, transporting both the fresh fallen snow and, from place to place, the old snow.

In the major regions of precipitation, the freshly formed snowdrift accumulations are to some extent large sized. In some places at high altitudes, they have been deposited on top of trigger sensitive layers from the last few days. Beneath these, the more deeply embedded layers are generally stable, except in southern Valais and in Grisons, where on north facing slopes in areas with shallow snow the snowpack is weak and faceted in some places.

Short-term development

Following a night of predominantly overcast skies it will be partly sunny on Monday morning. At midday in southern regions, clouds will move in, later on in western regions as well. Above approximately 1300 m, a bit of snowfall is anticipated. The midday temperature at 2000 m will be minus 2 degrees. The southwesterly wind will increase in strength; at high altitudes and in western regions, winds will be blowing at strong velocity during the afternoon.

Avalanche danger forecast for Monday

Northern Alpine Ridge not including the regions Alpstein-Alvier and Liechtenstein; in addition, Vaud Alps; Valais; Urseren; northern Ticino; Grisons not including northern Prättigau:

Considerable avalanche danger (Level 3)

In the regions of Chablais, Trient and Great St. Bernard, the Vaud Alps, on the Main Alpine Ridge from Avers into the Lower Engadine, in Val Poschiavo as well as in the regions of Bivio and St. Moritz, the avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects above approximately 2200 m. Both new fallen and newly drifted snow from the last few days can be triggered as avalanches even by a single backcountry skier or freerider. Such avalanches can attain medium size. For backcountry tours in outlying terrain, experience and restraint are essential.

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. Freshly formed snowdrift accumulations can be triggered even by one single person. They should be evaluated with great care. The proneness to triggering tends to escalate somewhat as the sun rises, even on south facing slopes. Experience in the assessment of avalanche hazards is imperative.

Regions north of the northern Alpine Ridge not including Vaud Alps; in addition, the regions Alpstein-Alvier and Liechtenstein; northern Prättigau; central Ticino; Sotto Ceneri:

Moderate avalanche danger (Level 2)

The avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on wind loaded slopes. In central Ticino and in Sotto Ceneri, the danger zones are found in all aspects above approximately 2200 m; in the remaining regions they are found primarily in western to northern to southeastern aspects above approximately 2000 m. The various layers of snowdrift from the last few days should be evaluated with great care. Both the frequency and the size of avalanche prone locations tend to increase with ascending altitude.

Particularly in the regions which have had the heaviest snowfall, moist snowslides and avalanches can be expected during the course of the day. This is especially the case on steep, sunny slopes below about 3000 m.

Trend for Tuesday and Wednesday

On Tuesday, snowfall, which in some places will be heavy, is anticipated above approximately 1300 m. The southwesterly wind will continue to blow at strong velocity. The danger of dry avalanches is expected to increase. On Wednesday it will be quite sunny and gradually turn warmer. During the course of the day, the hazards of wet avalanches will increase. The danger of dry avalanches will diminish incrementally.

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Moist snow avalanches over the course of the day

