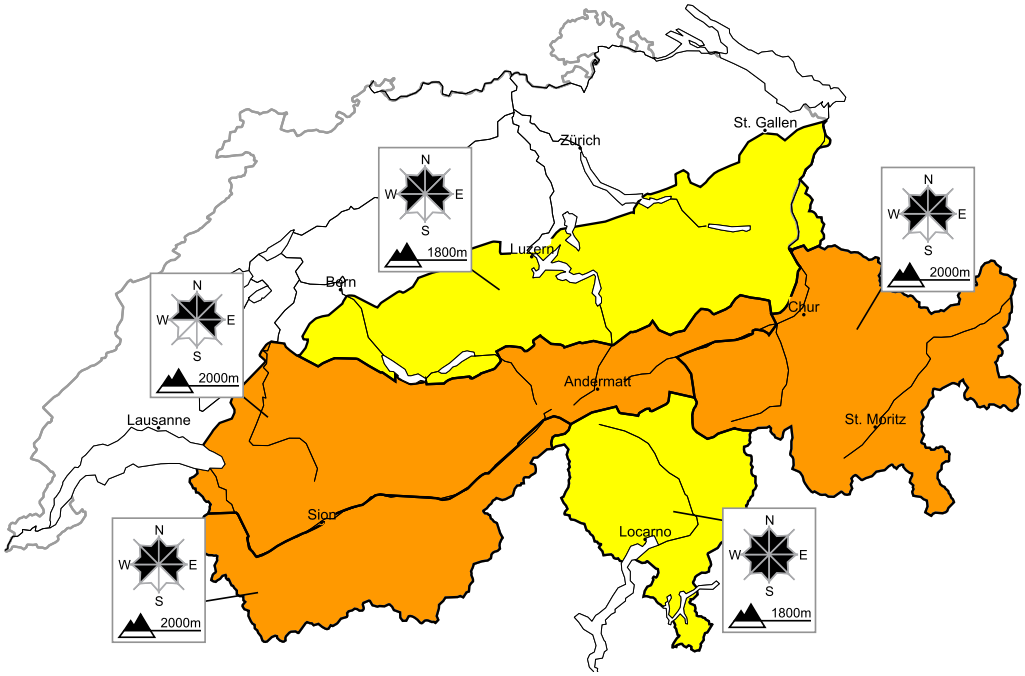
A precarious avalanche situation will persist

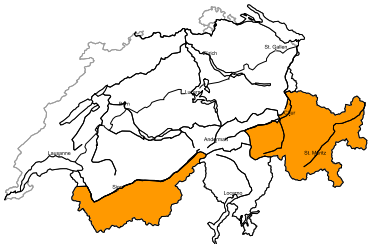
Edition: 31.12.2013, 08:00 / Next update: 31.12.2013, 17:00

Avalanche danger

updated on 31.12.2013, 08:00

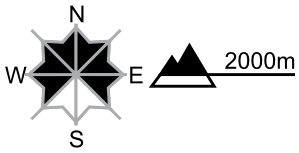


Region A — Level 3, considerable



Old snow, snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack in particular on shady slopes and generally at elevated altitudes. Avalanches can be released by a single winter sport participant. Remote triggering is possible in isolated cases. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

WSL Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research SLF
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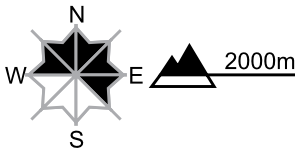
Region B — Level 3, considerable

Old snow, snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



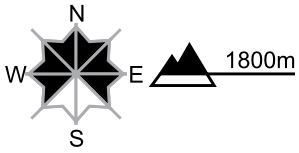
Danger description

Older snow drift accumulations are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack in particular on shady slopes. They are covered with fresh snow in some cases and therefore difficult to recognise. Single persons can release avalanches in some places. These can release the weakly bonded old snow as well. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Region C — Level 2, moderate

Old snow, snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



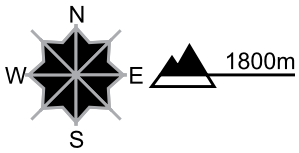
Danger description

Older snow drift accumulations are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack in particular on shady slopes. They are covered with fresh snow in some cases and therefore difficult to recognise. Avalanches can be released, in particular by large loads. In some cases they can release the weakly bonded old snow as well. The avalanche prone locations are to be found in particular at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack, when entering gullies and bowls for example.

Region D — Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The more recent snow drift accumulations are mostly small but in some cases prone to triggering. They are to be bypassed in steep terrain.
Avalanches can additionally in isolated cases be released in deeper layers, this applies in particular in case of a large load. Caution is to be exercised at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack, when entering gullies and bowls for example. Careful route selection is recommended.

Full-depth avalanches

On steep grassy slopes full-depth avalanches are possible below approximately 2000 m.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 30.12.2013, 17:00

Snowpack

On the northern flank of the Alps and in Valais and Grisons, most avalanche prone locations are covered with fresh snow and difficult to recognise. In these regions the deep layers of the snowpack are faceted and weak in most cases. This applies in particular on north facing slopes and at high altitudes. Avalanches can still be released in these deep, weak layers. In parts of southern Valais, central Grisons and Engadine, the likelihood of triggering is high. In the event of an avalanche, the entire snowpack will be released in most cases.
In Ticino, near-surface layers of the fairly recent snow drift accumulations in particular remain prone to triggering.

Observed weather on Monday, 30.12.2013

The weather was mostly sunny.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m: about -5 °C

Wind

· On Saturday night in the central part of the main Alpine ridge, moderate from the north
· Otherwise light to moderate from various directions

Weather forecast through Tuesday, 31.12.2013

Partly cloudy during the night. Mostly sunny during the day on New Year's Eve.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m: about 0 °C in the north and about -4 °C in the south

Wind

Mostly light from the southwest

Outlook through Thursday, 2.1.2014

New Year's Day will be quite sunny in the south. All other regions will be mostly cloudy and a little snow will fall above approximately 1000 m. Berchtold's Day will be cloudy. Snow will fall at times. The snowfall level will rise to between 1000 and 1300 m. The avalanche danger will not change significantly on New Year's Day, but will increase a little on Berchtold's Day as a consequence of fresh snow and wind.