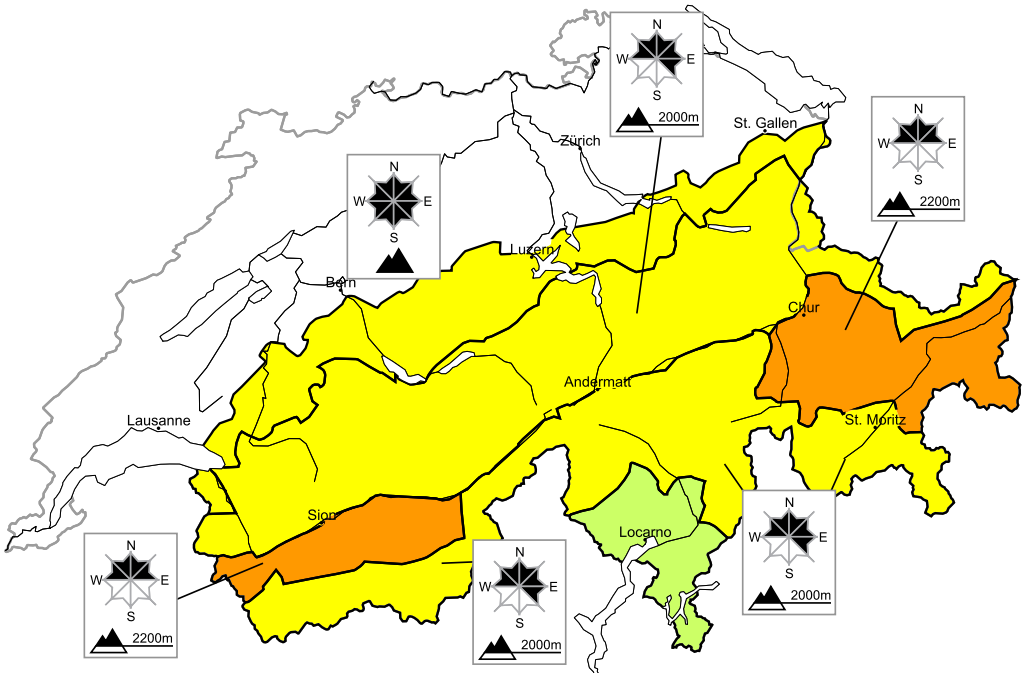
Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered in some regions. Wet avalanches as the day progresses

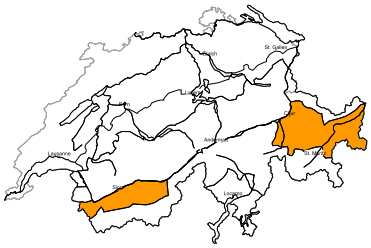
Edition: 12.1.2014, 08:00 / Next update: 12.1.2014, 17:00

Avalanche danger

updated on 12.1.2014, 08:00

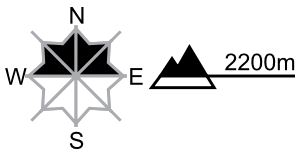


Region A — Level 3, considerable



Old snow, snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Distinct weak layers exist in the bottom section of the snowpack in particular on shady slopes. Avalanches can still in isolated cases be released by a single winter sport participant. They can penetrate down to the ground and reach a dangerous size. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. Experience in the assessment of avalanche danger is required.
Fresh and somewhat older snow drift accumulations are to be found in particular adjacent to the ridge line. This applies in particular in Valais.

Wet avalanches as day progresses, Full-depth avalanches

Small and, in isolated cases, medium-sized full-depth and wet avalanches are possible below approximately 2600 m.

Danger levels 1 low | 2 moderate | 3 consider. | 4 high | 5 very high

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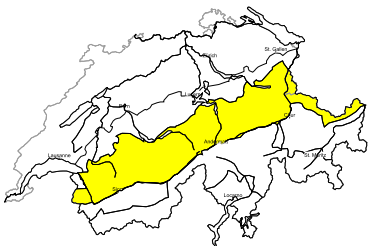
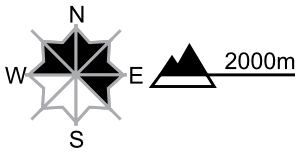
Region B — Level 2, moderate



Old snow, snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



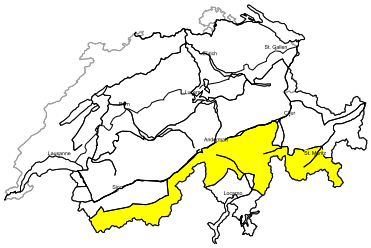
Danger description

Weak layers deep in the old snowpack can be released by people in particular at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack, when entering gullies and bowls for example. The mostly small snow drift accumulations of the last few days are to be evaluated with care and prudence. Careful route selection is important.

Wet avalanches as day progresses, Full-depth avalanches

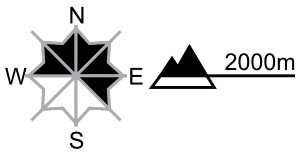
Small and, in isolated cases, medium-sized full-depth and wet avalanches are possible below approximately 2600 m.

Region C — Level 2, moderate



Old snow, snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



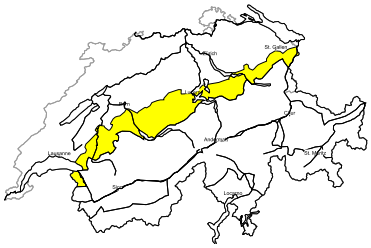
Danger description

Fresh and somewhat older snow drift accumulations are to be found in particular at high altitudes and in high Alpine regions. They are to be found in particular adjacent to the ridge line in all aspects. Deeper layers of the snowpack can be released by a single winter sport participant in some places in particular at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack, when entering gullies and bowls for example. This applies in particular in Lower Valais. Careful route selection is important.

Wet avalanches as day progresses, Full-depth avalanches

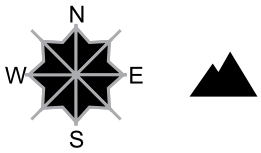
Small and, in isolated cases, medium-sized full-depth and wet avalanches are possible below approximately 2600 m.

Region D — Level 2, moderate



Wet avalanches as day progresses, Full-depth avalanches

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

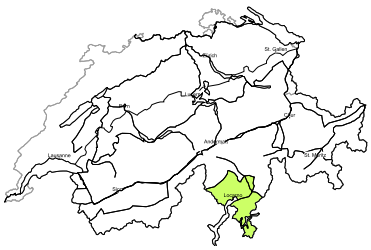
Wet avalanches during the day and full-depth avalanches are the main danger. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks. Some small and, in isolated cases, medium-sized natural avalanches are to be expected as a consequence of warming during the day and solar radiation, this also applies on shady slopes.

Old snow

Individual avalanche prone locations for dry avalanches are to be found in particular on very steep shady slopes and adjacent to the ridge line above approximately 2000 m.

Region E

Level 1, low



Old snow

Avalanches can in very isolated cases be released in near-surface layers. Apart from the danger of being buried, restraint should be exercised also in view of the danger of avalanches sweeping people along and giving rise to falls.

Wet avalanches as day progresses, Full-depth avalanches

Small and, in isolated cases, medium-sized full-depth and wet avalanches are possible below approximately 2200 m.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 11.1.2014, 17:00

Snowpack

On the southern flank of the Alps at 2000 m the snow is 120 to 200 cm deep; on the northern flank of the Alps, 50 to 80 cm deep. The snowline on north facing slopes is at approximately 1000 m; on south facing slopes in northern regions at 1200 to 1800 m, in southern regions at 1000 m. At intermediate altitudes the snow cover is zero-degree isotherm over widespread areas and moist. At high altitudes the snowpack on steep, south facing slopes is moist; elsewhere it is dry.
The snow layering at high altitudes is unfavourable in central Valais, in southern Lower Valais, in northern and central Grisons, in the Lower Engadine and in Val Müstair. In those regions more than anywhere else avalanches can still be triggered in more deeply embedded, weakly bonded layers inside the snowpack and then attain medium size. The snow layering is somewhat more favourable in the typical foehn-exposed regions of the north. It is most favourable of all on the southern flank of the Alps not including Val Müstair.
The predominantly small-sized snowdrift accumulations of recent days have been deposited for the most part in areas adjacent to ridgelines.

Observed weather on Saturday, 11.1.2014

On Saturday skies in northern regions were variably cloudy, in southern regions generally overcast. In the Valais and in the Engadine it was quite sunny.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m between +3 °C in northern regions, and -2 °C in southern regions

Wind

Light to moderate strength, shifting over the course of the day from southwesterly to northwesterly

Weather forecast through Sunday, 12.1.2014

On Saturday night in western and southern regions, skies will be clear by and large, in northeastern regions partially cloudy; and in those regions, light snowfall is possible. During the day on Sunday it will be sunny and mild in the Swiss Alps.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m between +5 °C in northern regions, and +2 °C in southern regions

Wind

Predominantly light northerly winds

Outlook through Tuesday, 14.1.2014

On Monday morning it will still be sunny in general. During the course of the day it will become increasingly cloudy from the west and south, accompanied by light snowfall from the west. The snowfall level will drop from 1600 m down to 1000 m. On Tuesday skies will be heavily overcast and snowfall is anticipated widespread above approximately 800 m. The danger of wet avalanches is expected to diminish. As Tuesday approaches, the danger of dry avalanches will increase in western and southern regions more than anywhere else.