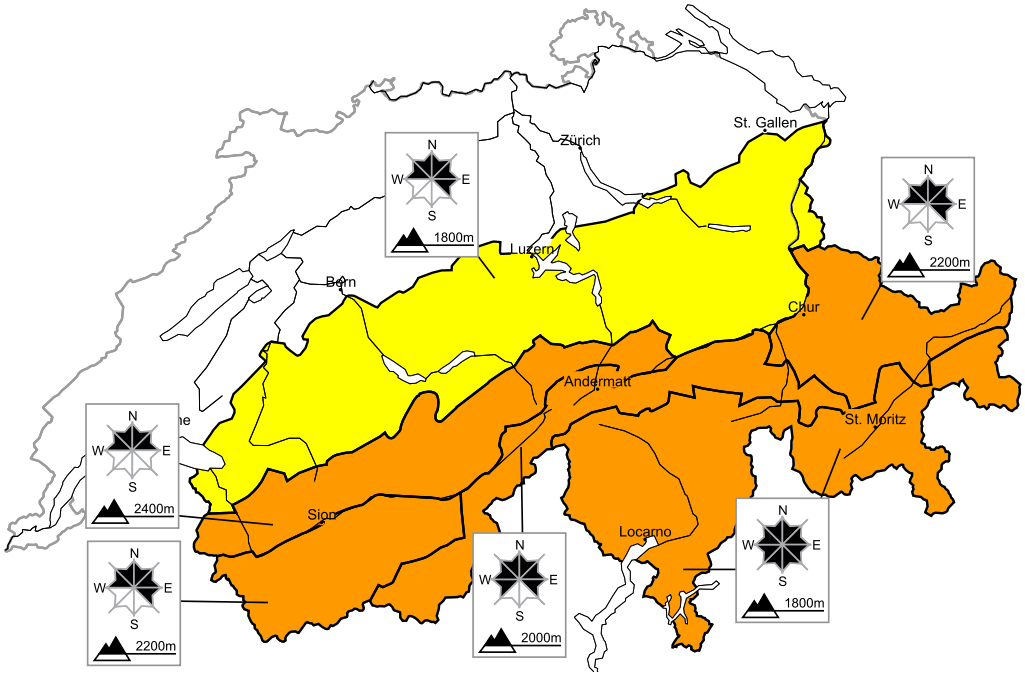
In the south a very precarious avalanche situation will prevail

Edition: 1.2.2014, 08:00 / Next update: 1.2.2014, 17:00

Avalanche danger

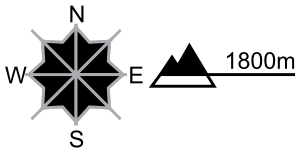
updated on 1.2.2014, 08:00



Region A — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The sometimes strong wind will transport the fresh snow significantly. Snow drift accumulations will form. These can be released easily or naturally. In particular on north facing slopes medium-sized natural avalanches are possible from starting zones at higher altitudes. Exposed parts of transportation routes are endangered in isolated cases. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.
Lower Engadine, Val Müstair: Avalanches can release the weakly bonded old snow as well. This applies in particular on very steep north facing slopes.

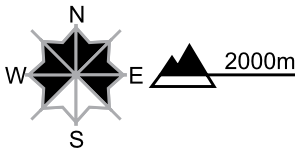
Wet and full-depth avalanches

Val Bregaglia, Val Poschiavo, central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri: Below approximately 1800 m full-depth and wet avalanches are to be expected.

Region B — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

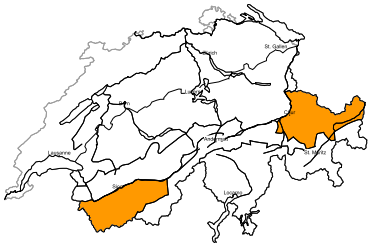
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

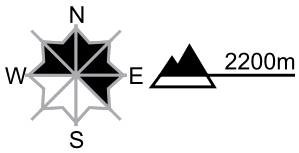
As a consequence of the strong wind easily released snow drift accumulations will form. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Region C — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations

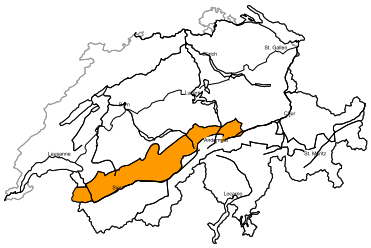


Danger description

As a consequence of the strong wind snow drift accumulations will form. This applies in particular adjacent to the ridge line as well as in high Alpine regions. The fresh snow drift accumulations can be released easily. They are to be bypassed in steep terrain.

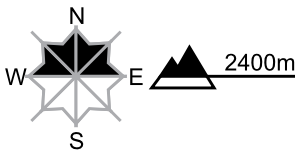
Additionally in some places avalanches can be released in the old snowpack. They can in isolated cases penetrate near-ground layers of the snowpack and reach dangerously large size. This applies in particular on very steep north facing slopes. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Region D — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The sometimes strong wind will transport the old snow. The fresh and older snow drift accumulations can be released by a single winter sport participant in some cases. Caution is to be exercised in particular adjacent to the ridge line and in pass areas as well as at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack, when entering gullies and bowls for example. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

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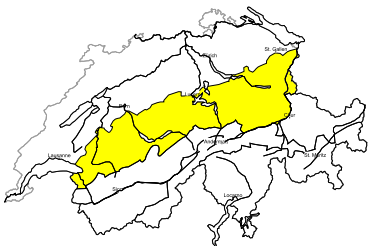
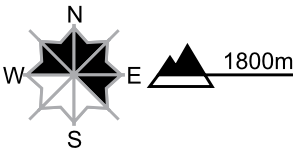
Region E

Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of the sometimes strong wind snow drift accumulations will form. These are mostly small but in some cases prone to triggering. Caution is to be exercised at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack, when entering gullies and bowls for example. In high Alpine regions the danger is higher. Careful route selection is recommended.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 31.1.2014, 17:00

Snowpack

On the southern flank of the Alps and in the Upper Engadine, the deeper layers of the old snow cover are favourably layered. The layers are least favourable in central Valais, in southern Lower Valais, in northern and central Grisons, in the Lower Engadine and in Val Müstair. Avalanches in those regions, particularly on very steep north facing slopes, can fracture and sweep away the snowpack down to the layers nearest to the ground or fracture in the deeply embedded layers of faceted snow crystals. These avalanche prone locations occur only seldom, but possible avalanches could still attain dangerously large size.
As a result of strong southerly winds, fresh snowdrift masses are accumulating at high altitudes in particular. These accumulations, especially in the Upper Engadine and on the southern flank of the Alps, are large-sized and prone to triggering. In these regions the snowdrift accumulations can be naturally triggered and sweep away the still loosely packed snow from Thursday and Friday's snowfall.
The avalanche corridors on the southern flank of the Alps are filled with snow down to low lying areas.

Observed weather on Friday, 31.1.2014

On Thursday night there was intense snowfall in the central and eastern sectors of the Main Alpine Ridge and south thereof as well as in the Engadine which extended intermittently down to low lying areas. Further towards the north the amounts of snowfall were significantly less. In the furthermost northern and western regions it remained dry. During the day on Friday it was partly sunny in northern regions, in southern regions skies were heavily overcast in general. There was only a small amount of additional snowfall.

Fresh snow
Between Wednesday evening and Friday evening the following amounts of fresh fallen snow were registered above approximately 1500 m:
· Main Alpine Ridge from Nufenen to the Ofen Pass and south thereof, 40 to 60 cm; from place to place, more
· immediately bordering regions to the north from Simplon into the Lower Engadine, 20 to 40 cm
· further to the north, significantly less or it remained dry

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m, in western and southern regions -3 °C and in eastern regions -1 °C

Wind
Light to moderate strength southerly winds, at high altitudes intermittently blowing at strong velocity

Weather forecast through Saturday, 1.2.2014

Following a night of clear skies in northern regions, cloud will move in from the west during the morning. During the afternoon in the furthermost western regions, snowfall will set in above approximately 800 m.
In southern regions skies will remain heavily overcast due to barrier weather effects. On Saturday morning, snowfall is expected to recommence which will intensify over the course of the day. The snowfall level will drop from about 1600 m down to below 1000 m during the afternoon.

Fresh snow
By Saturday evening, the following amounts of new fallen snow are anticipated:
· Simplon, central sector of southern flank of the Alps, Val Poschiavo, 15 to 30 cm
· bordering regions to the north as well as remaining regions of the Main Alpine Ridge, 5 to 15 cm
· elsewhere just a few centimeters

Temperature
Temperatures will drop: at 2000 m in northern regions, from +1 °C in the morning down to -5 °C in the evening, in southern regions from -1 °C down to -3 °C

Wind
Strong, intermittently storm-force southerly winds in the Swiss Alps. Particularly in the major areas of precipitation, the loosely packed snow will be transported.

Avalanche bulletin for Saturday, 1 February 2014

Outlook through Monday, 3.2.2014

Sunday

During the night and the following morning, snowfall is expected over widespread areas, particularly intensive in southern regions. The snowfall level will drop down to low lying areas. The avalanche danger is expected to increase widespread. In the eastern and central sectors of the southern flank of the Alps, danger level 4 (High) could be reached. For skiing and freeriding tours in outlying terrain away from secured ski runs, the avalanche situation in many places is highly treacherous.

Monday

It will be quite sunny in the mountains as a result of northeasterly winds. The avalanche danger is expected to incrementally decrease in the major areas of precipitation in particular.