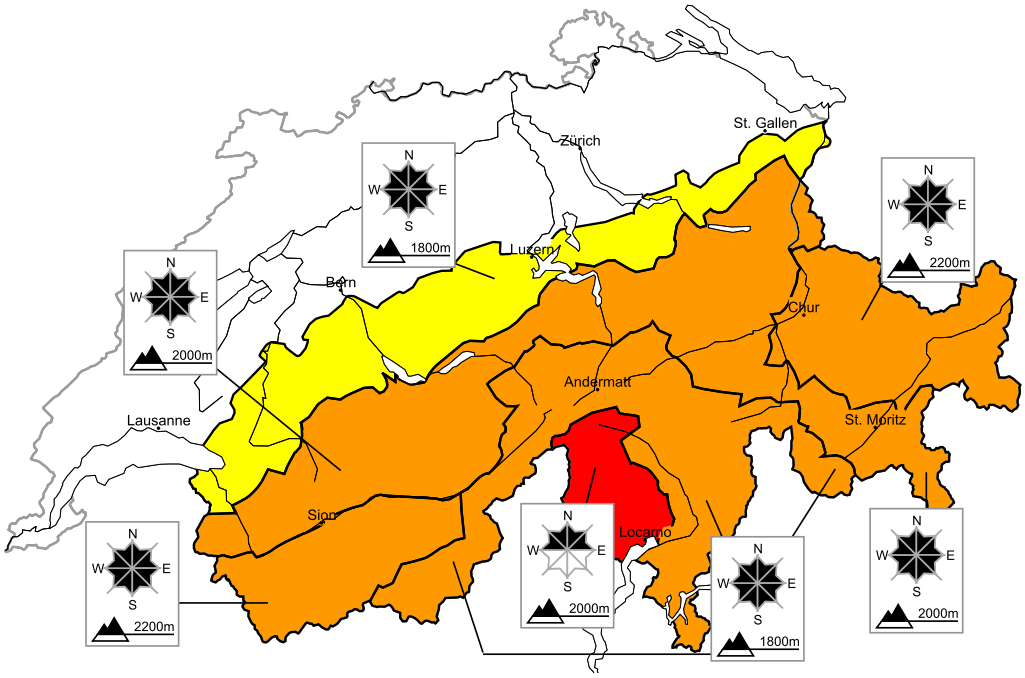
As a consequence of fresh snow and wind a high avalanche danger will be encountered in some regions

Edition: 3.2.2014, 08:00 / Next update: 3.2.2014, 17:00

Avalanche danger

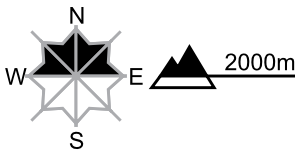
updated on 3.2.2014, 08:00



Region A — Level 4, high

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind large snow drift accumulations will form, especially at high altitude. The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations can be released easily or naturally. As the day progresses natural avalanches must be expected with increasing likelihood. This applies especially on steep north facing slopes. Avalanches can reach valley bottoms and in the majority of cases endanger exposed transportation routes. Slides are to be expected on cut slopes. The off-piste conditions are dangerous.

Wet and full-depth avalanches

Central Ticino: Below approximately 1600 m full-depth and wet avalanches are to be expected.

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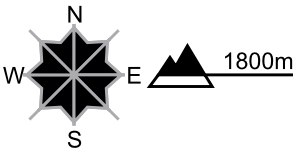
Region B — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



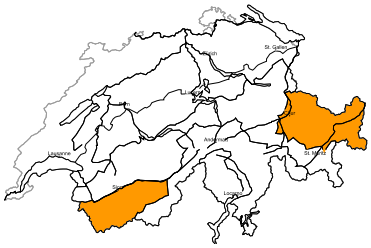
Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind snow drift accumulations will form. The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations can be released easily or naturally. Small and medium-sized natural avalanches are possible. The prevalence of avalanche prone locations will increase as the day progresses. Exposed parts of transportation routes can be endangered. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Wet and full-depth avalanches

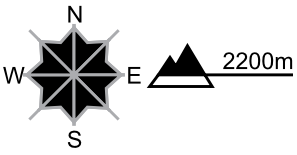
Central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri: Below approximately 1600 m full-depth and wet avalanches are to be expected.

Region C — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of the southerly wind snow drift accumulations will form, especially adjacent to the ridge line and in pass areas as well as in the regions that are exposed to the foehn wind. These can be released, even by a single winter sport participant. Older snow drift accumulations are covered with fresh snow and therefore difficult to recognise. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Old snow

Avalanches can in isolated cases be released in the old snowpack. They can penetrate near-ground layers of the snowpack and reach dangerously large size. This applies in particular on very steep north facing slopes.

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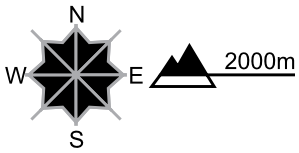
Region D — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



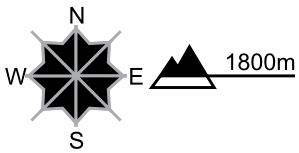
Danger description

As a consequence of the southerly wind snow drift accumulations will form, especially adjacent to the ridge line and in pass areas as well as in the regions that are exposed to the foehn wind. These can be released, even by a single winter sport participant. Older snow drift accumulations are covered with fresh snow and therefore difficult to recognise. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Region E — Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The somewhat older snow drift accumulations are covered with fresh snow and therefore difficult to recognise. Fresh snow drift accumulations 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. Careful route selection is recommended.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 2.2.2014, 17:00

Snowpack

On the southern flank of the Alps, the more deeply embedded layers inside the snowpack are favourably layered. In the bordering regions of the Main Alpine Ridge the deeply embedded layers are weakly bonded, but covered by well consolidated, thick layers of snow. On the northern flank of the Alps the snow layering is highly varied and heavily impacted by the successive phases of foehn winds. In the western regions in particular, loosely packed snow is found in more deeply embedded layers in some places. Least favourable are the deeply embedded layers in central Valais, in southern Lower Valais, in northern and central Grisons, in Lower Engadine and in Val Müstair. In those regions avalanches can fracture on very steep north facing slopes down to the layers nearest to the ground in some places. These avalanche prone locations occur seldom, but possible avalanches can nonetheless attain dangerously large size.
On the southern flank of the Alps the snow depths are approximately double the average for this juncture of the season. In the avalanche corridors, snow fills the concavities down to low lying areas.
Amidst southerly winds, snowdrift accumulations are forming in all regions. The layers of new fallen snow and freshly formed snowdrift, which to some extent are quite deep, are prone to triggering.

Observed weather on Sunday, 2.2.2014

On Saturday night there was snowfall in all regions of the Swiss Alps, heaviest on the southern flank of the Alps and in the bordering regions to the immediate north. During the day there was just a small amount of snowfall.

Fresh snow
Since the beginning of this period of precipitation on Saturday morning to Sunday morning:
· Maggia valleys, Bedretto, Urner Alps, upper Leventina and Tavetsch: 40 to 60 cm
· regions bordering to the north on Main Alpine Ridge and remaining Ticino: 20 to 40 cm
· further to the north, 10 to 20 cm
Thus, the overall amounts of new fallen snow over the last three days since Thursday morning:
· Maggia valleys: 80 to 100 cm
· remaining Ticino, Moesano, Main Alpine Ridge from Bergell into Val Poschiavo: 60 to 80 cm
· northern bordering regions along the Main Alpine Ridge: 40 to 60 cm
· northern bordering regions from Zermatt over Haslital, Muotatal and central Grisons into Val Müstair: 20 to 40 cm
· in the remaining regions further to the north, less

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m, -6 °C in western regions, -3 °C in southern and eastern regions

Wind
On Saturday night moderate to strong velocity southeasterly winds were still blowing, during the day on Sunday predominantly at light strength

Avalanche bulletin for Monday, 3 February 2014

Weather forecast through Monday, 3.2.2014

On the southern flank of the Alps skies will be overcast and further snowfall is anticipated, to some extent intensive. In northern regions it will be intermittently sunny. In the alpine valleys of the north, it will become increasingly foehn-affected over the course of the day, and noticeably milder.

Fresh snow

By Monday evening the following amounts of fresh fallen snow are anticipated:

- in the Upper Valais sector of the Main Alpine Ridge, in Bedretto and in the Maggia valleys: 20 to 40 cm
- in the remaining Gotthard region, in Ticino, in Moesano and on the Main Alpine Ridge from Bergell into Val Poschiavo: 10 to 20 cm
- further to the north the amounts of snowfall will be markedly less. On the northern flank of the Alps it will remain by and large dry.

The snowfall level will be at approximately 1000 m, in isolated valleys markedly lower down.

Temperature

Temperatures in northern regions are expected to rise noticeably, at midday at 2000 m at +2 °C, on the southern flank of the Alps at -2 °C

Wind

The winds will become brisker during the night and be blowing on Sunday at moderate to strong velocity, in high alpine regions at storm-force from southeasterly directions. In the Alpine valleys of the north, foehn winds are expected to come up. The loosely packed snowfall deposited on Sunday will be intensively transported as a result of the light winds.

Outlook through Wednesday, 5.2.2014

On the southern flank of the Alps skies will be heavily overcast and additional snowfall is anticipated. In northern regions skies will be variably to heavily cloudy. From region to region, a bit of snowfall is expected. Particularly on Wednesday, foehn winds are expected. The avalanche danger will increase in southern regions on Tuesday. In the remaining regions no significant change is expected.