Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area. Snow drifts require caution

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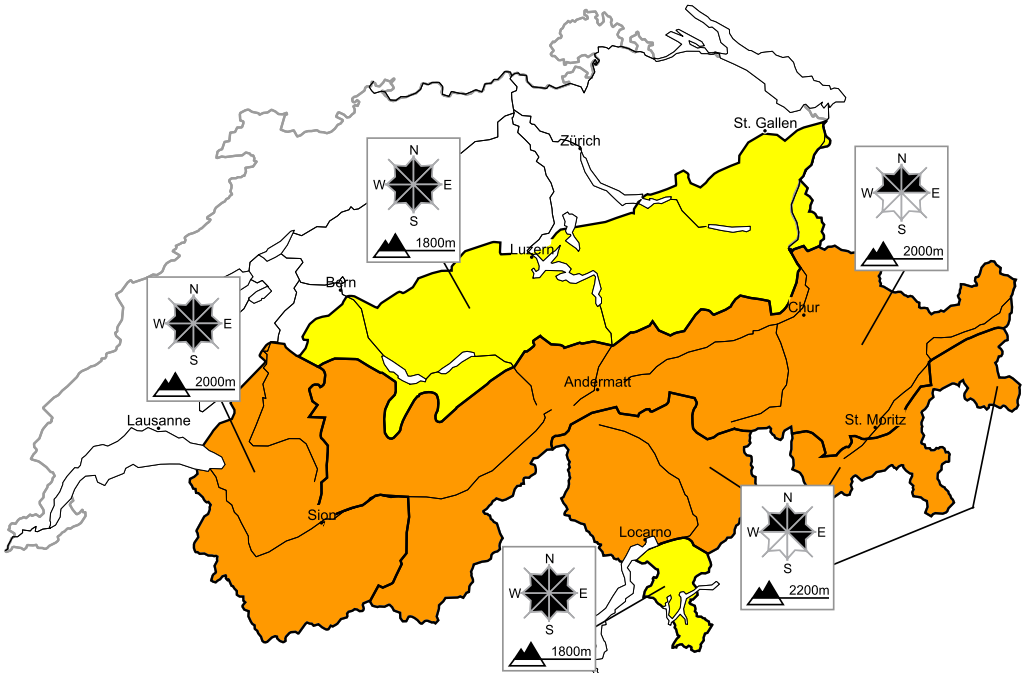
Avalanche danger

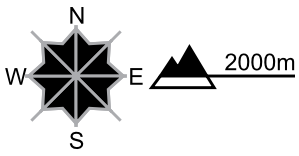
updated on 8.2.2014, 08:00



Region A — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are prone to triggering. Individual mostly small natural avalanches are possible, especially in the west. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Old snow

Southern Valais: Avalanches 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.

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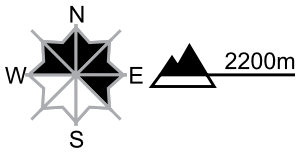
Region B — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



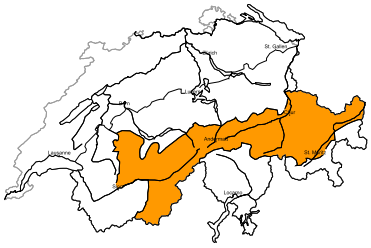
Danger description

The more recent snow drift accumulations are in some cases prone to triggering. The avalanche prone locations are covered with fresh snow and therefore difficult to recognise. Off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Full-depth avalanches

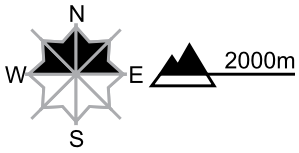
Below approximately 2000 m full-depth avalanches are to be expected. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks.

Region C — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The more recent snow drift accumulations are in some cases prone to triggering. The avalanche prone locations 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 and careful route selection.

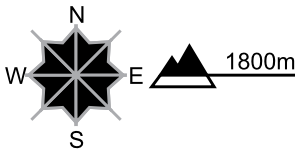
Old snow

Northern and central Grisons and Lower Engadine north of the Inn: Avalanches 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.

Region D — Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The somewhat older snow drift accumulations can be released, especially by large additional loads,. These avalanche prone locations are sometimes covered with fresh snow and therefore difficult to recognise. Caution is to be exercised at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack, when entering gullies and bowls for example. Fresh snow drift accumulations are mostly small but can be released easily. Meticulous route selection is important.

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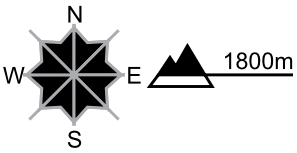
Region E

Level 2, moderate

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The snow drift accumulations of the last few days can be released, especially by large additional loads,. The fresh snow is in some cases prone to triggering. Careful route selection is required.

Full-depth avalanches

Below approximately 2000 m full-depth avalanches are possible. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 7.2.2014, 17:00

Snowpack

The large quantities of new fallen snow on the southern flank of the Alps are settling and consolidating increasingly. More than double the average amounts of snow for this juncture of the season have fallen in these regions. Prone to triggering throughout the Swiss Alps are the snowdrift and the new fallen snow of the last few days more than anything else.
The snow layering on the Main Alpine Ridge and southwards thereof is generally favourable. On the northern flank of the Alps the snow layering varies highly and is heavily contingent on the successive phases of foehn winds. Least favourable of all is the snow layering in southern Lower Valais, in northern and central Grisons and in northern Lower Engadine, where in some places (particularly on very steep north facing slopes) avalanches can fracture all the way down to the weakly bonded, near-to-the-ground layers. These avalanche prone locations occur rather seldom.

Observed weather on Friday, 7.2.2014

In northeastern regions there were foehn-induced bright intervals during the morning. In other regions snowfall set in from the west. The snowfall level dropped from 1500 m down to below 1000 m. In southern regions snow fell above approximately 800 m.

Fresh snow

Above 1500 m the following amounts of fresh fallen snow were registered:
· western Jura, westernmost Lower Valais, Vaud and Fribourg Alps: 15 to 30 cm
· southern flank of the Alps: 10 to 20 cm
· remaining regions, 5 to 10 cm over widespread areas

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, -3 °C in western and southern regions, 0° C in eastern regions

Wind

· on Thursday night, strong to storm-force southerly winds
· during the day on Friday, moderate strength southwesterly winds in northern regions, at light velocity in southern regions

Weather forecast through Saturday, 8.2.2014

On Friday night in the Engadine and the southern valleys of Grisons above all, there will be a small amount of additional snowfall. On Saturday morning in eastern and southern regions skies will still be bright. In western and southern regions, snowfall is expected to set in during the afternoon. The snowfall level in northern regions will be about 1000 m, in southern regions at 700 m.

Fresh snow

Above approximately 1500 m the following amounts of new fallen snow are anticipated:
· western Jura, Vaud and Fribourg Alps, Lower Valais, Engadine and southern valleys of Grisons: 5 to 15 cm
· remaining regions, just a few centimeters; in northeastern regions it will remain dry

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, -2 °C in northern regions and -4 °C in southern regions

Wind

In the foehn-exposed valleys, moderate strength foehn winds, at high altitudes stronger southwesterly winds

Outlook through Monday, 10.2.2014

Sunday
In northern regions skies will be variably cloudy. In western regions in particular, intermittent snowfall is anticipated. In southern regions it will be quite sunny. Temperatures are expected to drop markedly.
Avalanche danger is not expected to change significantly in western regions. In the other regions it will incrementally decrease.

Monday
In eastern regions skies will be bright as a result of foehn effects, elsewhere predominantly overcast accompanied by beginning snowfall. The avalanche danger is expected to increase in southern regions in particular.