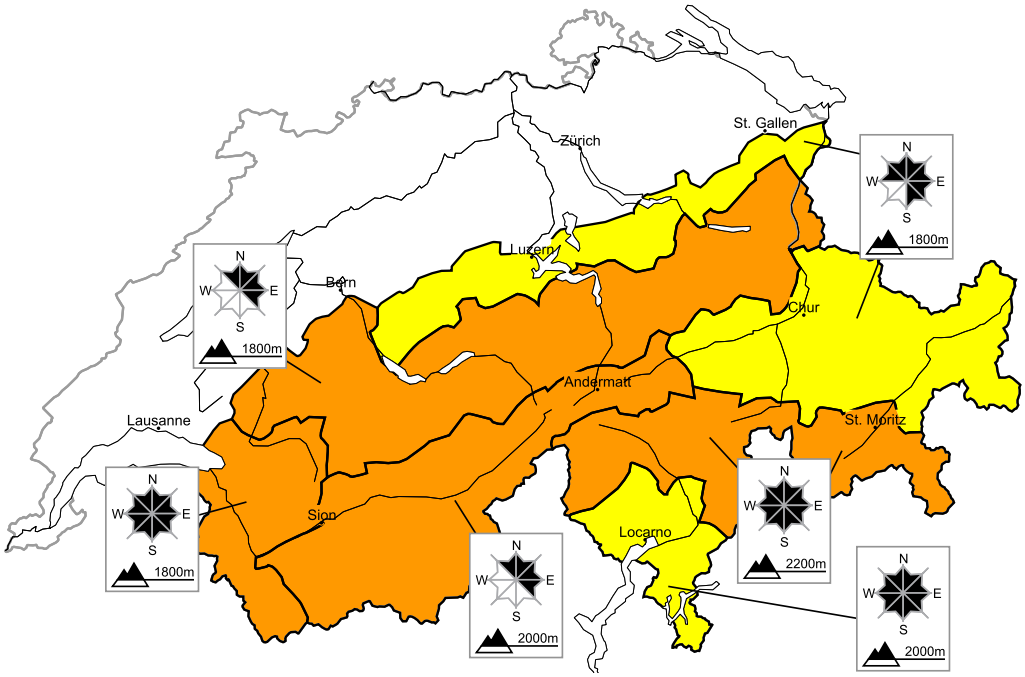
Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area. Snow drifts require caution

Edition: 14.2.2014, 08:00 / Next update: 14.2.2014, 17:00

Avalanche danger

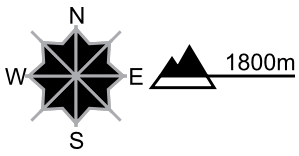
updated on 14.2.2014, 08:00



Region A — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind further snow drift accumulations have formed. These represent the main danger. Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches easily, including dangerously large ones. Individual natural avalanches are possible.

Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Old snow

Avalanches can in isolated cases penetrate near-ground layers of the snowpack and reach dangerously large size, especially on very steep north facing slopes in Chablais and in the extreme west of Lower Valais.

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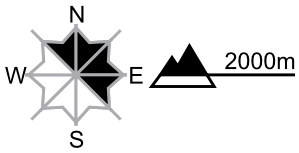
Region B — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Snow drifts represent the main danger. As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind the snow drift accumulations have increased in size additionally. The snow drift accumulations are covered with fresh snow in some cases and therefore difficult to recognise. Even single snow sport participants can release avalanches. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

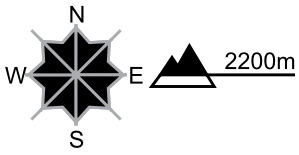
Old snow

Avalanches can in isolated cases penetrate near-ground layers of the snowpack and reach dangerously large size, especially on very steep north facing slopes in the inneralpine regions.

Region C — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

In all aspects avalanche prone snow drift accumulations have formed. They are to be avoided. Single snow sport participants can release avalanches. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Full-depth avalanches

Especially below approximately 2000 m full depth avalanches can be released naturally and reach a dangerous size.

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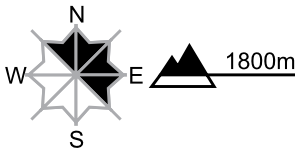
Region D — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Snow drifts represent the main danger. As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind the snow drift accumulations have increased in size additionally. The snow drift accumulations are covered with fresh snow in some cases and therefore difficult to recognise. Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches easily. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

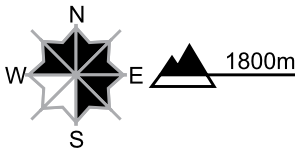
Wet avalanches as day progresses

In the afternoon more frequent wet snow slides and avalanches are possible, in particular below approximately 2000 m.

Region E — Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The mostly small snow drift accumulations can be released by a single winter sport participant in some cases. They are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. The snow drift accumulations are covered with fresh snow and therefore difficult to recognise. The number and size of avalanche prone locations will increase with altitude. In high Alpine regions the danger is higher. Defensive route selection is recommended.

Old snow

The inneralpine regions of Grisons, Prättigau, Silvretta and Samnaun: Avalanches can in isolated cases penetrate near-ground layers of the snowpack and reach dangerously large size. Caution is to be exercised on steep, little used north facing slopes.

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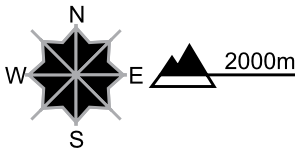
Region F

Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh and older snow drift accumulations represent the main danger. They are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Avalanches can be released, even by small loads in isolated cases, but they will be small in most cases. Careful route selection is recommended.

Full-depth avalanches

Especially below approximately 2000 m full depth avalanches can be released naturally and reach a dangerous size.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 13.2.2014, 17:00

Snowpack

In western regions in particular, as well as at high altitudes in general, snowdrift accumulations which are prone to triggering have formed as a result of strong to storm-force winds. Thursday night's new fallen snow is also being transported intensively in some places.
The old snow cover is for the most part favourably layered on the Main Alpine Ridge and southwards thereof. On the northern flank of the Alps the snow structuring varies greatly and shows heavy impact from the successive phases of foehn winds. Least favourable is the snow layering in southern Lower Valais, in northern and central Grisons and in northern Lower Engadine. In those regions, on very steep north facing slopes in particular, avalanches can sweep away the snowpack all the way down to the lowermost weakly bonded, near-to-ground layers. These avalanche prone locations tend to occur seldom.

Observed weather on Thursday, 13.2.2014

In eastern and southern regions, it was to some extent still sunny this morning; elsewhere, heavily overcast in general. In western regions snowfall set in during the morning, in eastern regions during the afternoon. The snowfall level rose towards 1400 m by midday.

Fresh snow

Above 1500 m the following amounts of new fallen snow were registered:
· northern Alpine Ridge west of the Wildstrubel, western Lower Valais, 15 to 30 cm
· remaining Valais, remaining western sector of northern flank of the Alps, 5 to 15 cm
· elsewhere, less; or it remained dry

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, in northern regions -1 °C and in southern regions -5 °C

Wind

The wind intensified in velocity over the course of the day.
· in some northern regions, storm strength southwesterly to westerly winds
· in the alpine valleys, strong southerly foehn wind
· in Ticino, light to moderate southerly winds

Weather forecast through Friday, 14.2.2014

On Thursday night, temperatures in northern regions are expected to drop noticeably. Snowfall is anticipated down to low lying areas. In the early morning hours the snowfall will slacken off throughout the Swiss Alps. During the course of the day it will turn quite sunny in eastern and southern regions; in western regions high altitude clouds will move in. In northern regions it will become mild.

Fresh snow

· northern flank of the Alps and Valais, 10 to 20 cm; central sector of Main Alpine Ridge, as much as 30 cm
· elsewhere, 5 to 15 cm

Temperature

Temperatures will rise markedly in northern regions: at 2000 m, climbing from -8 °C in the early morning to 0 °C in the afternoon; in southern regions, -4 °C

Wind

At high altitudes, moderate to strong velocity winds; during the night from the northwest, during the day from southwest to west.

Avalanche bulletin for Friday, 14 February 2014

Outlook through Sunday, 16.2.2014

Saturday

In northern regions it will be partly sunny and very mild accompanied by foehn wind storms; in southern regions skies will be heavily overcast by and large. In southern regions and in the furthermost western regions a bit of snowfall is expected above approximately 1000 m. The avalanche danger is not expected to change significantly.

Sunday

On Sunday skies will be heavily overcast for the most part. Snowfall is anticipated over widespread areas above approximately 1000 m. The avalanche danger may well increase somewhat from region to region.