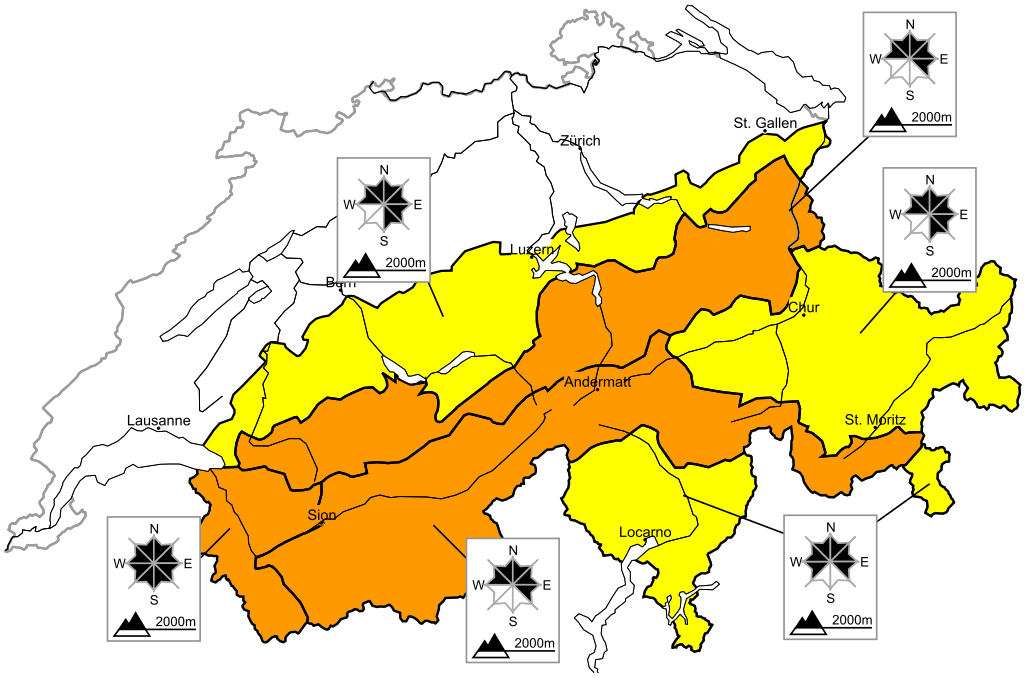
Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area. Fresh snow drifts represent the main danger

Edition: 15.2.2014, 08:00 / Next update: 15.2.2014, 17:00

Avalanche danger

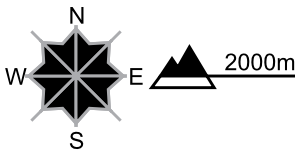
updated on 15.2.2014, 08:00



Region A — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of the sometimes storm force wind further snow drift accumulations will form. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches easily, including medium-sized ones. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.
Additionally in isolated cases avalanches can penetrate near-ground layers of the snowpack and reach dangerously large size. This applies especially on very steep north facing slopes along the border with France.

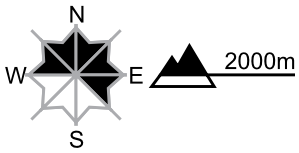
Wet avalanches as day progresses

As a consequence of warming more frequent mostly small moist snow slides and avalanches are possible, especially on very steep slopes below approximately 2000 m.

Region B — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of the sometimes storm force wind further snow drift accumulations will form. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches easily, including medium-sized ones. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.
The inneralpine regions of Valais: Avalanches can in isolated cases penetrate near-ground layers of the snowpack and reach dangerously large size. This applies especially on steep north facing slopes.

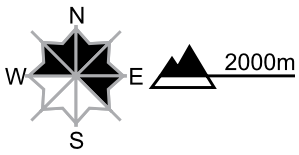
Full-depth avalanches

Main Alpine Ridge from the Gotthard region to the Bernina Pass: Especially below approximately 2000 m full depth avalanches can be released naturally and reach a dangerous size.

Region C — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of the sometimes storm force wind sometimes avalanche prone snow drift accumulations will form. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches easily. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

As a consequence of warming more frequent mostly small moist snow slides and avalanches are possible, especially on very steep sunny slopes below approximately 2000 m.

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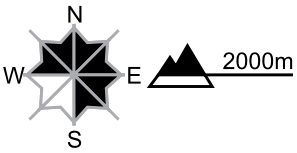
Region D — Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of the foehn wind mostly small snow drift accumulations will form. They are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. The snow drift accumulations can be released by a single winter sport participant in some cases. 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 in particular on steep, little used north facing slopes.

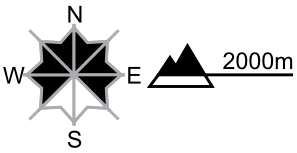
Remarks

As a consequence of warming more frequent full-depth and wet avalanches are possible below approximately 2000 m, especially on very steep sunny slopes.

Region E — Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The mostly small snow drift accumulations of the last few days represent the main danger. They are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Avalanches can in isolated cases be released by people. Careful route selection is recommended.

Full-depth avalanches

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

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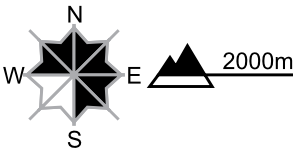
Region F

Level 2, moderate

Wet avalanches as day progresses

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of the foehn wind mostly small snow drift accumulations will form. They are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. The snow drift accumulations can be released by a single winter sport participant in some cases. The number and size of avalanche prone locations will increase with altitude. Defensive route selection is recommended.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

As a consequence of warming more frequent mostly small moist snow slides and avalanches are possible, especially on very steep slopes. Very steep slopes are to be bypassed as far as possible.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 14.2.2014, 17:00

Snowpack

In all regions of the Swiss Alps, the uppermost, near-to-surface layers of the snowpack, more than anything else, are prone to triggering.
As a result of the foehn wind storms, further snowdrift accumulations are still forming, and these, in turn, are blanketing older layers of snowdrift.
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 Friday, 14.2.2014

On Friday night, snow fell over widespread areas. During the day it was predominantly sunny on the southern flank of the Alps, in Grisons it was variably cloudy, elsewhere skies were heavily overcast. In western regions there was a small amount of snowfall over the course of the day.

Fresh snow
Between Thursday evening and Friday morning above approximately 1400 m, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow were registered:
· over widespread areas, 5 to 10 cm
· in the eastern sector of the northern flank of the Alps and from place to place in other regions, up to 20 cm
Thus, all in all, during the period of precipitation between Thursday morning and Friday morning, there were the following amounts of snowfall:
· in Lower Valais and in northern Upper Valais, as well as in Goms and the eastern sector of the northern flank of the Alps, 20 to 30 cm widespread
· elsewhere, 10 to 20 cm widespread; in Grisons, less than 10 cm of new fallen snow

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m, in western regions -2 °C, in southern and eastern regions -4 °C

Wind
Westerly winds were blowing at moderate to strong velocity over widespread areas; on the southern flank of the Alps and in Grisons, winds were light to moderate.

Weather forecast through Saturday, 15.2.2014

On the southern flank of the Alps skies will be heavily overcast; in the afternoon a bit of snowfall is anticipated above approximately 900 m. In northern regions it will be quite sunny as a result of foehn influence; during the course of the afternoon it will turn increasingly cloudy from the west.

Fresh snow
· southern flank of the Alps: just a few centimeters

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m, between +4 °C in northern regions and -4 °C in southern regions

Wind
Southwesterly winds will be blowing at strong to storm strength, reaching deep down in the foehn-exposed valleys.

Avalanche bulletin for Saturday, 15 February 2014

Outlook through Monday, 17.2.2014

Sunday

On Sunday, skies will be heavily overcast and temperatures are expected to drop significantly in northern regions in particular. A small amount of snowfall is anticipated widespread above approximately 1000 m. The avalanche danger is not expected to change significantly.

Monday

In western regions it will be quite sunny already in the early morning hours. In the remaining regions it will gradually turn sunny over the course of the day. The avalanche danger is expected to incrementally decrease.