Avalanche bulletin for Monday, 5 January 2015

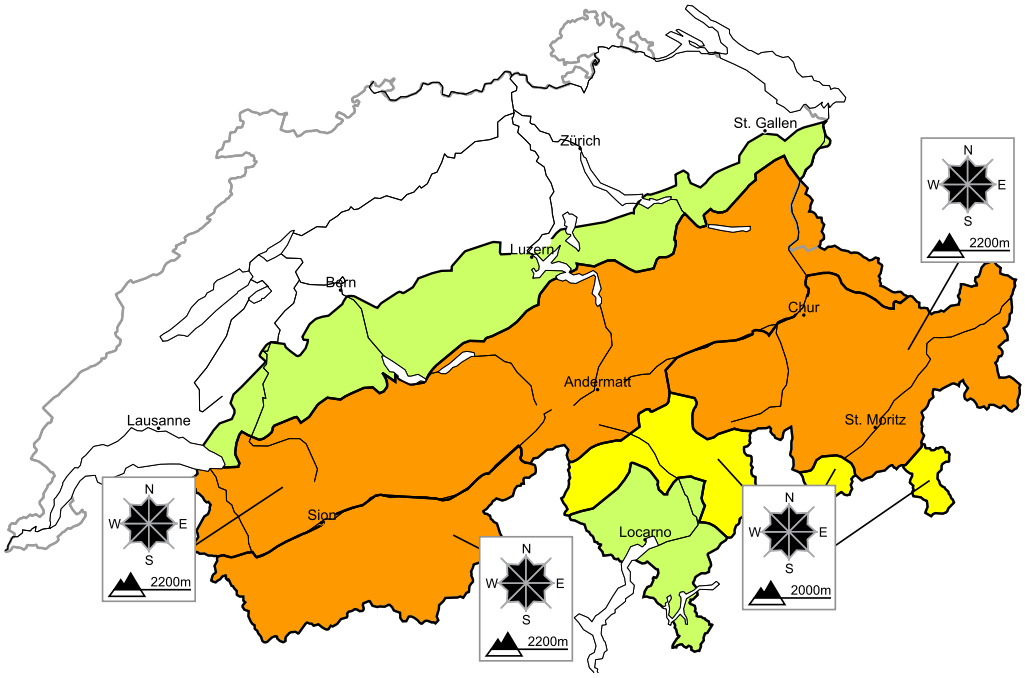
5.1.2015, 07:30

At high altitude a precarious avalanche situation will be encountered over a wide area

Edition: 5.1.2015, 08:00 / Next update: 5.1.2015, 17:00

Avalanche danger

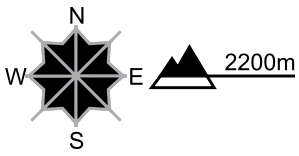
updated on 5.1.2015, 08:00



region A | **Level 3, considerable**

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are prone to triggering. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches. These can in isolated cases penetrate deep layers and reach medium size. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

As a consequence of warming during the day and solar radiation mostly small moist avalanches are possible. This applies in particular on very steep sunny slopes.

Danger levels 1 low | 2 moderate | 3 consider. | 4 high | 5 very high

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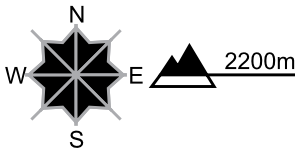
region B — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



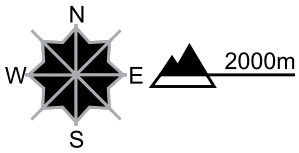
Danger description

Fresh snow and snow drift accumulations can in many cases be released, even by a single winter sport participant. Additionally avalanches can release deeper layers of the snowpack and reach medium size. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack indicate the danger. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience and restraint.

region C — Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Avalanches can in particular be released in near-surface layers of the snowpack. Mostly they are small but in some cases easily released. The prevalence of avalanche prone locations will increase with altitude. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for careful route selection. The fresh snow drift accumulations are to be evaluated with care and prudence.

region D — Level 1, low

Wet avalanches as day progresses

A clear night will be followed in the early morning by favourable avalanche conditions. As the day progresses wet snow slides are possible. Restraint should be exercised because avalanches can sweep people along and give rise to falls.

region E — Level 1, low

Snow drifts

Individual avalanche prone locations are to be found in extremely steep terrain. Fresh snow drift accumulations are to be evaluated with care and prudence. Even a small avalanche can sweep snow sport participants along and give rise to falls.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 4.1.2015, 17:00

Snowpack

As a result of new fallen snow and winds, snowdrift accumulations which are prone to triggering have formed above approximately 2200 m. At high altitudes, snow masses continue to be transported ongoingly. The freshly formed snowdrift accumulations in the major areas of precipitation north of an imaginary Rhine-Rhone line and in the Praettigau are large sized; in the remaining regions which have also received new fallen snow, generally small to medium sized.
With the exception of the southern flank of the Alps, the more deeply embedded layers inside the snow cover are frequently weak at high altitudes and contain layers of faceted snow crystals buried inside them. This scenario is particularly prevalent in the indicated regions of the Valais and Grisons, where precisely in those layers avalanches can easily be triggered in some places. On the southern flank of the Alps, the snowpack is structured more favourably. It is well consolidated over widespread areas. It manifests heavy marks of influence from the northerly winds. Potential avalanches can be triggered most easily there in the layers of the snowpack nearest to the uppermost surface.
More than anywhere else in the major areas of precipitation the snowpack below approximately 2000 m is thoroughly wet. On Sunday night, when skies are expected to be clear, the wet snowpack will be able to stabilise.

Observed weather on Sunday, 4.1.2015

On Saturday night there was precipitation which was intermittently intensive. The snowfall level lay at approximately 2000 m for an extended period. During the morning hours it was still snowing in western regions and in the Valais. Over the course of the day, bright intervals appeared, to begin with in eastern and in southern regions, later on in western regions as well.

Fresh snow

Between Saturday afternoon and Sunday evening, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow were registered above approximately 2400 m:

- Northern sector of Alpine Ridge, Urseren, Praettigau: 30 to 50 cm
- Remaining sectors of northern flank of the Alps, remaining parts of Valais, remaining Gotthard region, central Grisons, Lower Engadine: 10 to 30 cm
- Further to the south: less snowfall; in Sotto Ceneri it remained dry.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, between -7 °C in eastern and -1 °C in western and in southern regions

Wind

On Saturday night, strong velocity to storm-strength northwesterly winds, blowing at moderate to strong velocity during the day

Weather forecast through Monday, 5.1.2015

Skies will be clear on Sunday night. During the day on Monday it will be sunny.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, between 0 °C in western and -4 °C in eastern regions

Wind

Strong northerly winds in high alpine regions, elsewhere blowing at moderate velocity. In the afternoon, winds are expected to slacken off somewhat.

Outlook through Wednesday, 7.1.2015

On Tuesday it will be sunny in the Swiss Alps. In northern regions there will be high fogbanks below approximately 1000 m. On Wednesday it will be sunny for the most part. Winds will slacken off significantly. The avalanche danger is expected to diminish.