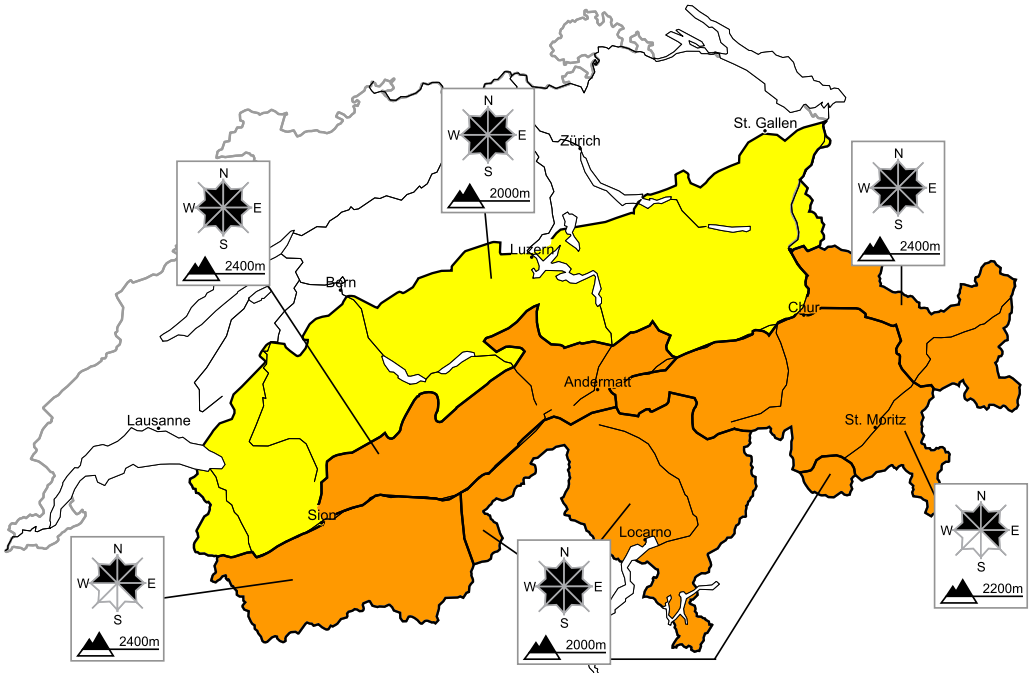
Weakly bonded old snow in Grisons and in Valais. Fresh snow drifts require caution

Edition: 23.1.2015, 08:00 / Next update: 23.1.2015, 17:00

Avalanche danger

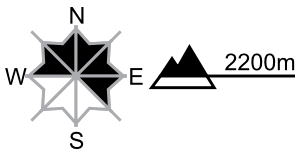
updated on 23.1.2015, 08:00



region A | **Level 3, considerable**

Old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Avalanches can be triggered in deep layers and reach dangerously large size, especially in little used backcountry terrain. Remote triggering is possible in isolated cases. Caution is to be exercised at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack, when entering gullies and bowls for example as well as in areas where the snow cover is rather shallow. The avalanche prone locations are barely recognisable. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

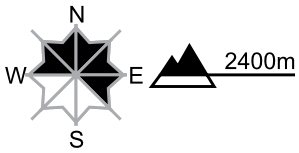
Snow drifts

Fresh and older snow drift accumulations are to be found in particular adjacent to the ridge line in all aspects. They are prone to triggering. The avalanche prone locations are to be found in particular above approximately 2400 m.

region B — Level 3, considerable

Old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Avalanches can be released in the weakly bonded old snow in particular in little used backcountry terrain. The avalanche prone locations are barely recognisable. Caution is to be exercised in particular at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. Off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

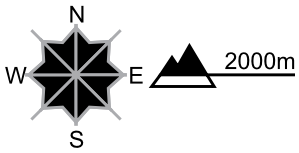
Snow drifts

Fresh and older snow drift accumulations are to be found in particular adjacent to the ridge line in all aspects. They are prone to triggering. The avalanche prone locations are to be found in particular above approximately 2800 m.

region C — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Over a wide area 30 to 40 cm of snow. has fallen yesterday. As a consequence of the northerly wind easily released snow drift accumulations will form. These are clearly recognisable to the trained eye. The snow drift accumulations are to be avoided in steep terrain. Ski touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Full-depth avalanches

On cut and grassy slopes mostly small full-depth avalanches are possible.

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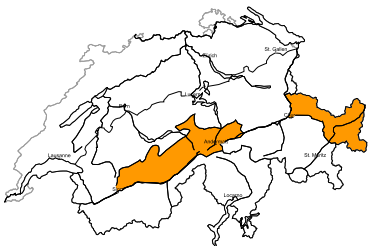
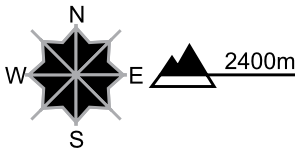
region D — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts, old snow

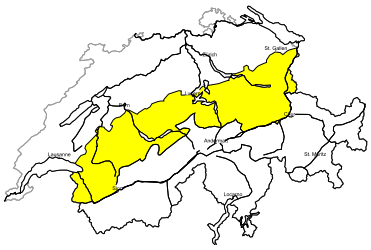
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

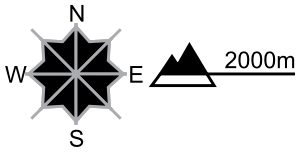
Fresh and somewhat older snow drift accumulations represent the main danger. They can be released by a single winter sport participant. The avalanche prone locations are clearly recognisable to the trained eye. The snow drift accumulations are to be bypassed as far as possible.
Northern Alpine ridge west of the Gemmi Pass and Grisons: Avalanches can in isolated cases be released in the weakly bonded old snow, especially in little used backcountry terrain. Avalanches can reach medium size in isolated cases. These avalanche prone locations are rather rare but difficult to recognise. Caution is to be exercised at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack.

region E — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Fresh and somewhat older snow drift accumulations represent the main danger. They are to be found in particular adjacent to the ridge line and in gullies and bowls. The fresh snow drift accumulations can in some cases be released by a single winter sport participant, but they will be small in most cases. The avalanche prone locations are clearly recognisable to the trained eye. The snow drift accumulations are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 22.1.2015, 17:00

Snowpack

As a result of southerly winds over the last few days, snowdrift accumulations have formed more than anywhere else in areas adjacent to ridgelines and pass areas, as well as in high alpine regions. These drifted masses are still prone to triggering in many places. On Friday, the northeasterly winds will give rise to further snowdrift accumulations which will also be prone to triggering.
Crusts and weak, faceted layers of snow lie deeply embedded inside the snow cover. The structuring of the snowpack is least favourable in the Valais and in Grisons; avalanches in these regions can ongoingly be triggered in the old snow cover even by one single person. On the northern flank of the Alps, the medium-deep and deeper-down layers inside the snow cover are structured somewhat more favourably. On the southern flank of the Alps the snow layering is predominantly good; fractures in the old snowpack are possible only in isolated cases.

Observed weather on Thursday, 22.1.2015

In northern regions high fog was prevalent, extending to an upper borderline at approximately 1800 m. Above that altitude, skies were variably cloudy. In southern regions the snowfall came to an end during the morning. Over the course of the day, increasingly frequent bright intervals made themselves felt. In central Valais it was predominantly sunny.

Fresh snow

Between Wednesday afternoon and Thursday midday above approximately 1000m, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow were registered:

- Simplon region, central Ticino, Sotto Ceneri, as well as Val Moesa: 30 to 40 cm.
- Southern Goms, northern Ticino, high Val Moesa and Bergell: 15 to 30 cm; elsewhere, less. In northern regions it remained dry.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, -4 °C

Wind

During the night, moderate to strong velocity southerly to southeasterly winds were blowing, slackening off during the course of the day

Weather forecast through Friday, 23.1.2015

In northern regions below approximately 2200 m, skies are expected to be heavily overcast for the most part. A few centimeters of snowfall is anticipated down to low lying areas. Above that altitude, as well as in central Grisons, it will be quite sunny. In southern regions it will become increasingly sunny over the course of the day.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, -7 °C in northern regions and -3 °C in southern regions

Wind

At high altitudes, moderate strength northeasterly winds; in Ticino, moderate velocity northerly winds will prevail as far down as intermediate altitudes.

Avalanche bulletin for Friday, 23 January 2015

Outlook through Sunday, 25.1.2015

Saturday

On Saturday it will be quite sunny in the mountains to begin with, before clouds move in from the northwest during the afternoon. Subsequently, a small amount of snowfall is expected in northern regions, extending down to low lying areas. In Ticino it will be rather sunny as a result of strong northerly winds in many areas. As a result of the new fallen snow the avalanche danger is expected to increase somewhat at high altitudes more than anywhere else. Elsewhere, the danger levels are not expected to change significantly.

Sunday

In northern regions skies will be heavily overcast by and large, accompanied by snowfall. In southern regions it will be quite sunny, accompanied by northerly winds. The avalanche danger is expected to increase somewhat in northern regions.