Avalanche bulletin for Saturday, 14 February 2015

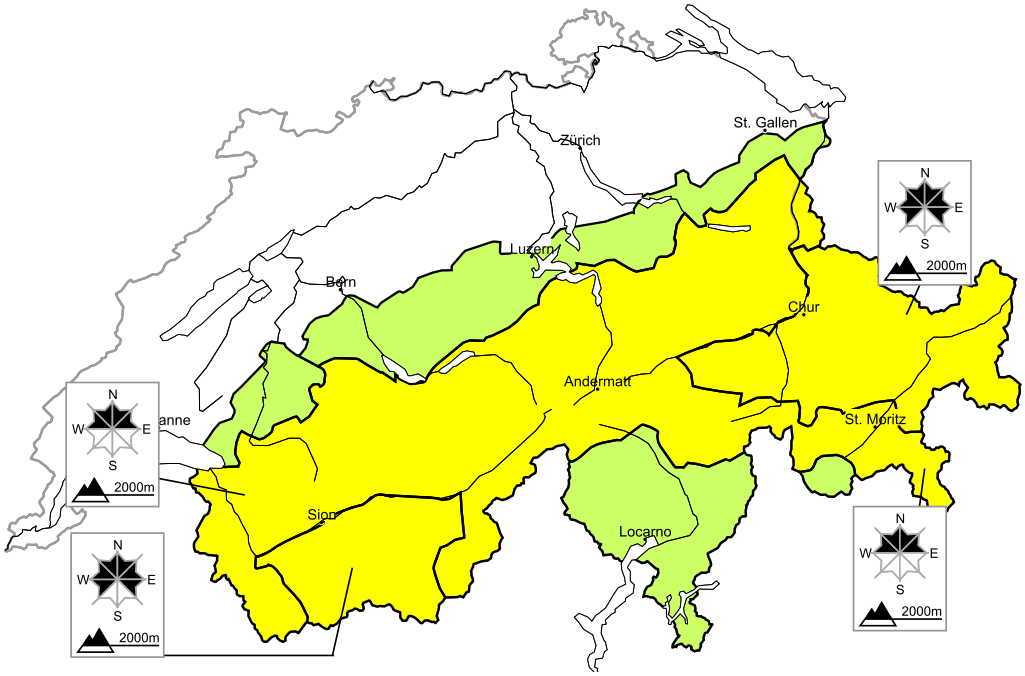
14.2.2015, 07:25

Moderate avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area

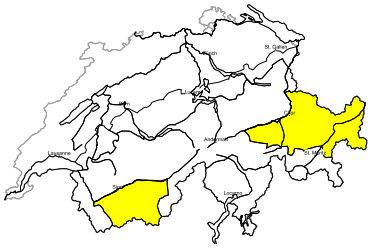
Edition: 14.2.2015, 08:00 / Next update: 14.2.2015, 17:00

Avalanche danger

updated on 14.2.2015, 08:00

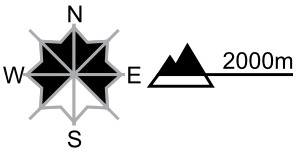


region A — Level 2, moderate



Old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The near-surface layers of the snowpack can be released by a single winter sport participant in some places. In some cases avalanches can penetrate even deep layers and reach medium size in isolated cases. These avalanche prone locations are to be found in particular in little used backcountry terrain. They are difficult to recognise. The conditions are treacherous. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for defensive route selection. Very steep slopes are to be traversed by snow sport participants one at a time. Western part of the main Alpine ridge: As the day progresses mostly small snow drift accumulations will form. These are to be evaluated with care and prudence at elevated altitudes.

Full-depth avalanches

South facing slopes below approximately 2200 m: Individual full-depth avalanches are possible, but they will be mostly small.

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

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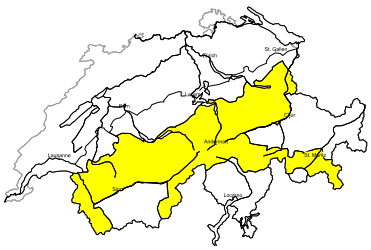
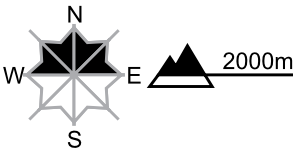
region B — Level 2, moderate



Old snow

Avalanche prone locations



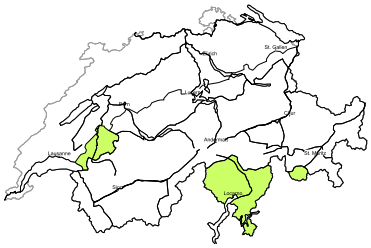
Danger description

The near-surface layers of the snowpack can be released especially by large additional loads. The avalanche prone locations are to be found in particular at transitions into gullies and bowls and in areas where the snow cover is rather shallow. In very isolated cases avalanches can also release deeper layers of the snowpack and reach quite a large size. Ski touring and other off-piste activities, including snowshoe hiking, call for careful route selection.
Vaud Alps, Lower Valais, Main Alpine Ridge and Val Poschiavo: As the day progresses mostly small snow drift accumulations will form. These are to be evaluated with care and prudence at elevated altitudes.

Full-depth avalanches, Wet avalanches as day progresses

South facing slopes below approximately 2200 m: Individual full-depth avalanches and moist snow slides are possible. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks.

region C — Level 1, low



Snow drifts

The conditions in the morning are favourable. As the day progresses mostly small snow drift accumulations will form, in particular at elevated altitudes. These are to be evaluated with care and prudence in very steep terrain. In the afternoon as a consequence of the snowfall there will be an increase in the avalanche danger to level 2 (moderate).

region D — Level 1, low

Wet avalanches as day progresses, Full-depth avalanches

As a consequence of warming during the day and solar radiation individual full-depth avalanches and moist snow slides are possible.
Individual avalanche prone locations for dry avalanches are to be found in particular in extremely steep terrain. Restraint should be exercised because avalanches can sweep people along and give rise to falls.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 13.2.2015, 17:00

Snowpack

In western and southern regions, particularly at high altitudes, as a result of the new fallen snow small-sized snowdrift accumulations are currently in the process of forming which are prone to triggering.
In most regions of the Swiss Alps the snowpack surface bears heavy marks from wind influence and is highly irregular. On south facing slopes, in very steep terrain below approximately 2000 m, a melt-freeze crust tends to form during the nights which is subsequently capable of bearing loads in the early morning hours.
More than anywhere else in southern Valais and in the inneralpine regions of Grisons, noticeably weak layers are evident, embedded deep down inside the snowpack. Particularly in these regions, avalanches can fracture at deeper levels down inside the snowpack and release. On the northern flank of the Alps, the structuring of the snow cover is more favourable. Nevertheless even here, isolated weak layers threaten from inside the old snowpack, in particular in the western sectors of the northern flank of the Alps. On the southern flank of the Alps the overall snow structure is firm and favourably layered by and large.

Observed weather on Friday, 13.2.2015

It was for the most part sunny. During the course of the day, high altitude cloud cover moved in from the west and the south.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, 0 °C

Wind

light winds

Weather forecast through Saturday, 14.2.2015

In western and in southern regions, snowfall is anticipated. The snowfall level will be between 500 and 1000 m. In eastern regions, skies will be variably cloudy as a result of the foehn-wind scenario.

Fresh snow

Between Friday evening and Saturday evening, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow are expected:

- furthermost western part of Lower Valais, Main Alpine Ridge from Great St. Bernard to the Bernina Pass and southwards thereof: 10 to 20 cm
- Vaud and Fribourg Alps, remaining parts of Valais: 5 to 10 cm
- remaining regions, less; in eastern regions it will remain dry.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, between -5 °C in western and southern regions; -3°C in eastern regions

Wind

At high altitudes, moderate to strong velocity winds from southerly to southwesterly directions. Elsewhere winds will be light.

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Outlook through Monday, 16.2.2015

Sunday

In western and southern regions, snowfall is anticipated. In eastern regions there will be foehn-induced bright intervals. The avalanche danger is expected to increase in western and southern regions. In the remaining regions, no significant change in avalanche danger levels is anticipated.

Monday

The direction of approaching weather developments is still uncertain. Particularly in northern regions, variably cloudy skies accompanied by snow showers are expected. In southern regions there will be additional snowfall from region to region. The avalanche danger levels there could possibly increase still further.