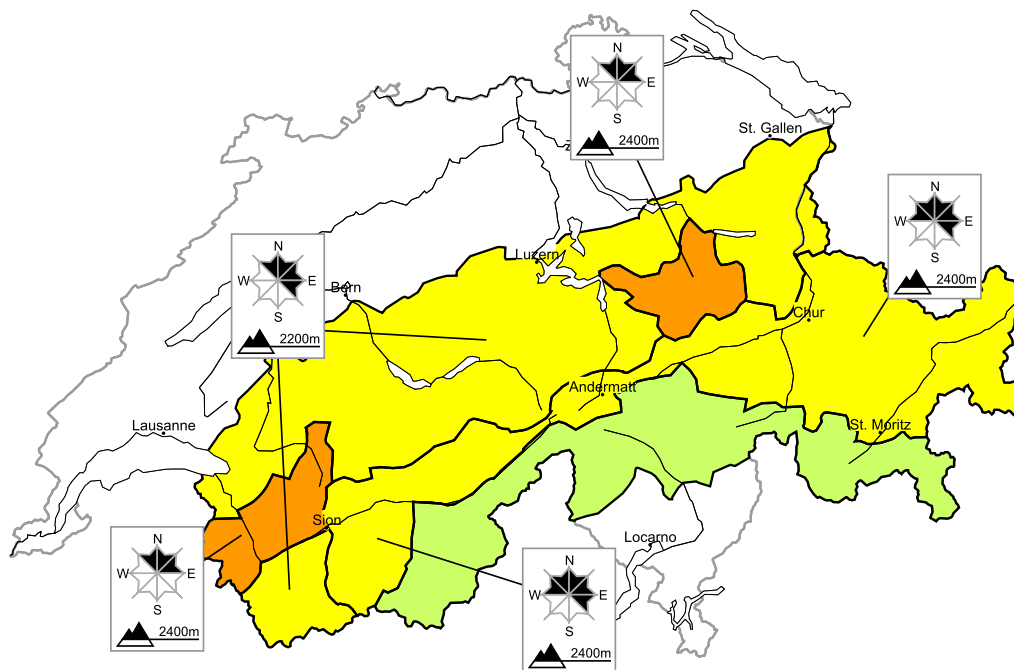


Snow drift accumulations at elevated altitudes. Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered in some regions

Edition: 3.1.2016, 08:00 / Next update: 3.1.2016, 17:00

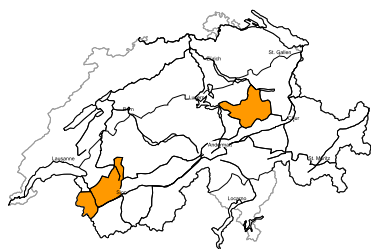
Avalanche danger

updated on 3.1.2016, 08:00



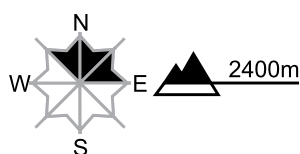
region A

Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Fresh snow drift accumulations are bonding poorly with the old snowpack in particular on shady slopes at elevated altitudes. They can be released, even by a single winter sport participant. The snow drift accumulations are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Mostly avalanches are small. Apart from the danger of being buried, restraint should be exercised also in view of the danger of avalanches sweeping people along and giving rise to falls.

Danger levels

1 low

2 moderate

3 consider.

4 high

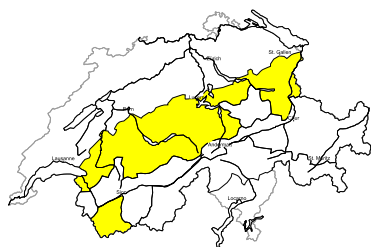
5 very high



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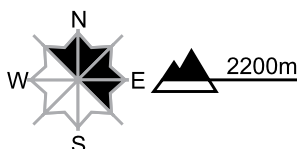
region B

Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations

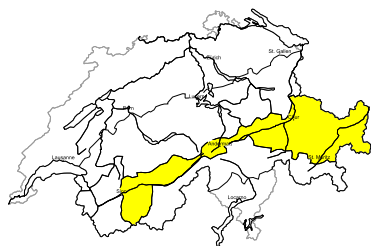


Danger description

Fresh snow drift accumulations are bonding poorly with the old snowpack in particular on shady slopes above approximately 2200 m. They can be released, even by a single winter sport participant, but they will be small in most cases. Caution is to be exercised in particular in steep rocky terrain as well as in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Apart from the danger of being buried, restraint should be exercised in particular in view of the danger of avalanches sweeping people along and giving rise to falls. In high Alpine regions avalanche prone locations are more widespread and the danger is slightly greater.

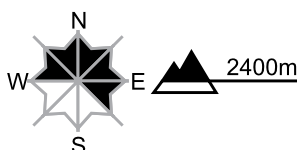
region C

Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations

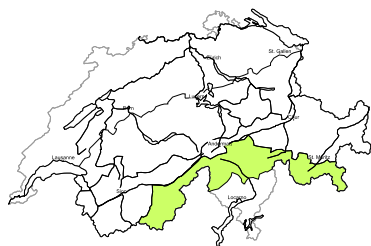


Danger description

Fresh snow drift accumulations are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack on shady slopes at elevated altitudes. They can be released, even by a single winter sport participant, but they will be small in most cases. Caution is to be exercised in particular in steep rocky terrain as well as in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Apart from the danger of being buried, restraint should be exercised in particular in view of the danger of avalanches sweeping people along and giving rise to falls.

region D

Level 1, low



Snow drifts

Only a little snow is lying. Fresh snow drift accumulations are only small but prone to triggering. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in extreme terrain, in particular on shady slopes above approximately 2500 m. Restraint should be exercised because avalanches can sweep people along and give rise to falls.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 2.1.2016, 17:00

Snowpack

There is currently extraordinarily little snow in the mountains of Switzerland. In southern regions and the Engadine there is less snow for this juncture of the season than at any time since the historical launch of measurement-taking.

Prior to the current bout of snowfall, the snow cover over widespread areas at high altitudes and in high alpine regions in shady zones which are largely protected from winds is heavily faceted, loosely packed and in some places blanketed with surface hoar. This is an extremely inadequate fundament as a base for the coming precipitation. The most recently formed snowdrift accumulations can be easily triggered. The drifted masses are small to begin with, but are expected to grow significantly as a result of the snowfall forecast for the next few days. The avalanche prone locations are found more than anywhere else on very steep, north-facing slopes, in gullies and in bowls; thus, they are located precisely where off-piste winter sports are enjoyed, that is, the only places where they are currently possible.

On south-facing slopes, the snow cover is often encrusted, thus providing a more favourable snow base for the approaching snowfall. Very steep south-facing slopes are completely bare of snow up to high altitudes, on the Main Alpine Ridge and southwards thereof, even approaching altitudes of 3000 m.

Observed weather on Saturday, 2.1.2016

In northerneastern regions there were a few bright intervals on Berchtold's Day; in other regions skies were heavily overcast and from the west, precipitation set in. The snowfall level in western regions was initially at approximately 1500 m, subsequently dropped down to about 1200 m.

Fresh snow

By this afternoon, the following amounts of new fallen snow were registered:

- western part of Lower Valais, Vaud Alps: approximately 10 cm
- remaining regions: only a few centimeters

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, in northern regions 0 °C and in southern regions -4 °C.

Wind

Light to moderate strength winds blowing from southerly to westerly directions.

Weather forecast through Sunday, 3.1.2016

The precipitation is expected to persist until Sunday morning. The snowfall level in northern regions will descend to approximately 1000 m; in southern regions, it will remain at low altitudes. During the course of the day the precipitation will come to an end and more extensive bright intervals are anticipated before clouds again move in from the west during the afternoon.

Fresh snow

Between Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow are anticipated:

- northern sector of Alpine Ridge, Lower Valais and northern Grisons: 10 to 20 cm
- remaining regions, maximum 10 cm; in Ticino only a few snow flurries

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, approximately -4 °C.

Wind

- On the southern flank of the Alps, intermittently strong velocity northerly winds will be blowing on Saturday night.
- In other regions, moderate strength westerly winds; on Sunday evening, winds will become brisker and shift to southwesterly.

Outlook through Tuesday, 5.1.2016

On both days skies will by and large be heavily overcast and above approximately 1000 m repeated snowfall is anticipated, most of which is expected to fall in western regions. On Monday in northern regions, a brief spell of foehn wind influence is anticipated; in other regions, strong to storm-strength westerly winds are expected. On high altitude, shady slopes, both new fallen and newly drifted snow will be deposited on top of an old snowpack which is poorly structured and weak. The avalanche danger is expected to increase, in northern and especially in western regions, significantly. In those regions, the avalanche scenario is expected to become very critical for all winter sports participants.