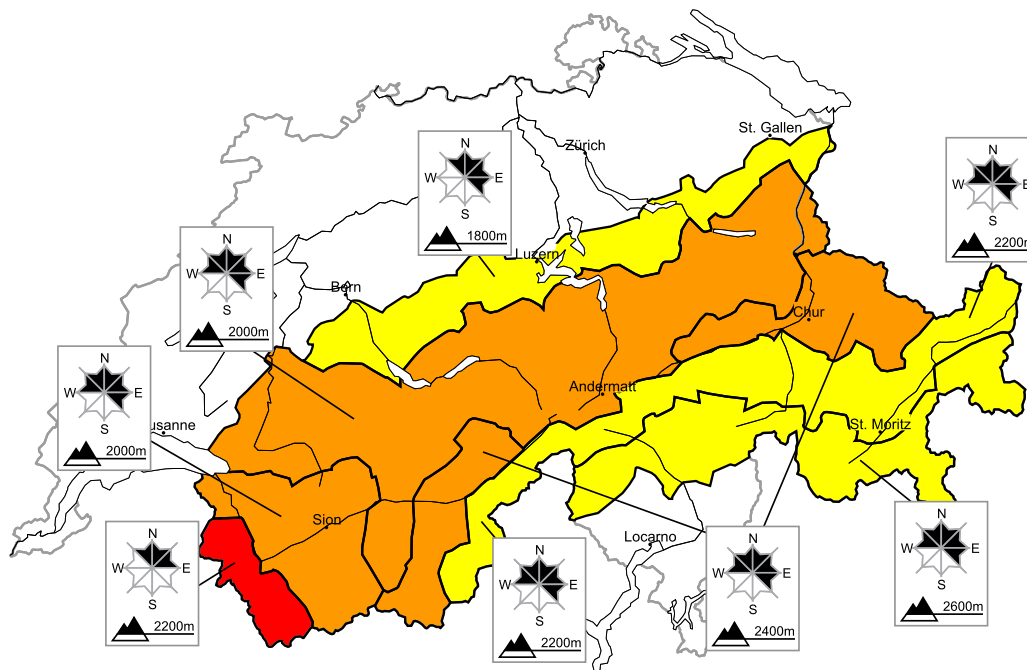


In the west a critical avalanche situation will prevail

Edition: 4.1.2016, 08:00 / Next update: 4.1.2016, 17:00

Avalanche danger

updated on 4.1.2016, 08:00



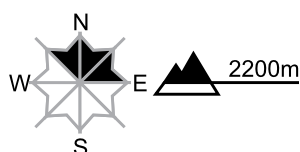
region A

Level 4, high



Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations will be deposited on a weakly bonded old snowpack on shady slopes above approximately 2200 m. A large number of small and medium-sized natural avalanches are to be expected. The avalanches can scarcely reach the valleys. Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches easily. Whumpfung sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack serve as an alarm indicating the danger. Ski touring and other off-piste activities, including snowshoe hiking, call for great caution and restraint.

Danger levels

1 low

2 moderate

3 consider.

4 high

5 very high



WSL Institute for Snow and
 Avalanche Research SLF
 www.slf.ch

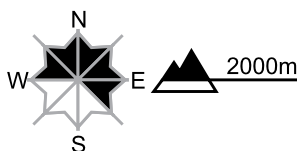
region B

Level 3, considerable



Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations

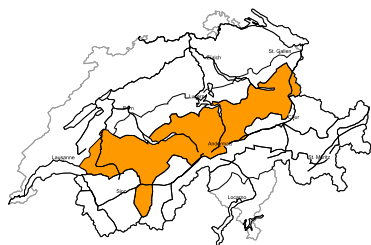


Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations will be deposited on a weakly bonded old snowpack on shady slopes at elevated altitudes. Avalanches can in many places be released, even by a single winter sport participant. Whumpfung sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack serve as an alarm indicating the danger. Small and, in isolated cases, medium-sized natural avalanches are to be expected. Ski touring and other off-piste activities, including snowshoe hiking, call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

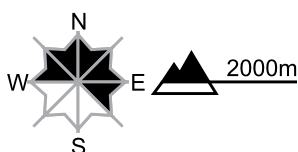
region C

Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations

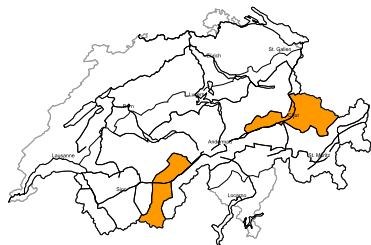


Danger description

Fresh snow drift accumulations are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack on shady slopes at elevated altitudes. They are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Avalanches can be released very easily, but they will be small in most cases. Whumpfung sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. Backcountry touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger. 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.

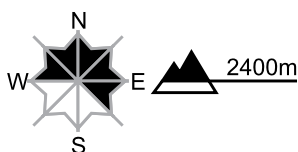
region D

Level 3, considerable



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 are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Avalanches can be released very easily, but they will be small in most cases. Whumpfung sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. Backcountry touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger. 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.

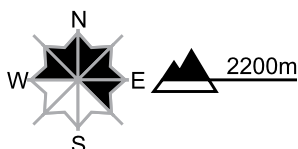
region E

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 in many cases 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. Whumpfung sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. 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.

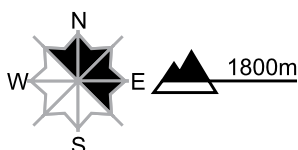
region F

Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow drift accumulations are prone to triggering. They are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Avalanches can in some cases be released by a single winter sport participant, but they will be small in most cases. 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.

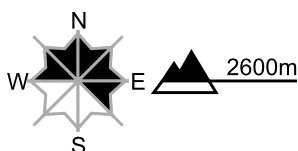
region G

Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Only a little snow is lying. Fresh snow drift accumulations are only small but prone to triggering. They are lying on the unfavourable surface of an old snowpack on shady slopes at elevated altitudes. The snow drift accumulations are to be evaluated with care and prudence in extreme terrain. Restraint should be exercised because avalanches can sweep people along and give rise to falls.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 3.1.2016, 17:00

Snowpack

In the Swiss Alps there is very little snow for this juncture of the season. Prior to the current round of snowfall, the snow cover over widespread areas at high altitudes and in high alpine regions in those shady zones which are largely protected from winds was heavily faceted, loosely packed and in some places blanketed with surface hoar. This presented an extremely inadequate fundament as a base for the current spell of precipitation. Fresh fallen snow and recently formed snowdrift accumulations in those places can be easily triggered by people or can trigger naturally. The snowdrift accumulations will expand in number and size significantly as a result of snowfall and storm-strength winds, particularly in western and northern regions. Especially dangerous are steep, north-facing slopes, gullies and bowls; thus, the perilous spots 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 old snow cover is often encrusted, thereby providing a more favourable snow base for the current round of snowfall. Very steep south-facing slopes are lacking in old snow completely including up to high altitudes, on the Main Alpine Ridge and southwards thereof even approaching altitudes of 3000 m.

Observed weather on Sunday, 3.1.2016

There was snowfall last night above approximately 800 m. During the day today it was predominantly sunny, before in the afternoon high altitude clouds once again moved in from the west.

Fresh snow

Between Saturday morning and Sunday morning, the following amounts of new fallen snow were registered:

- northern flank of the Alps, Lower Valais, Grisons: widespread 10 to 20 cm
- Upper Valais, Gotthard region, Ticino, Anterior Rhine valley, Val Calanca, Val Moesa: 5 to 10 cm

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, in northern regions -5 °C and in southern regions -2 °C.

Wind

- Last night in southern regions and in Grisons, northerly winds were blowing to some extent at strong velocity.
- In other regions, winds blowing at light to moderate strength from westerly to southwesterly directions, becoming brisker during the afternoon.

Weather forecast through Monday, 4.1.2016

Skies will be heavily overcast and above approximately 800 m snowfall is anticipated which in some places on the northern flank of the Alps and in western regions will be heavy. The strong to storm-strength winds are expected to transport the fresh fallen snow and, to some extent, even the loosely packed old snow intensively.

Fresh snow

By Monday evening above approximately 1000 m, the following amounts of new fallen snow are anticipated:

- Lower Valais, Vaud and Fribourg Alps, northern sector of Alpine Ridge from Les Diablerets to the Reuss: 20 to 40 cm; in the furthestmost western part of Lower Valais as much as 60 cm
- southern part of Upper Valais, remaining regions north of an imaginary Rhine-Rhone line: 10 to 20 cm
- Ticino and remaining parts of Grisons: maximum 10 cm

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, approximately -5 °C.

Wind

Strong velocity winds, on the northern flank of the Alps and in high alpine regions blowing at storm-strength, from southwesterly to westerly directions.

Outlook through Wednesday, 6.1.2016

On both days, skies will for the most part be heavily overcast as a result of brisk westerly winds. Above approximately 800 m, repeated small bouts of snowfall are anticipated, more than anywhere else in western regions and on the northern flank of the Alps. In southern regions, sunny intervals are also expected in the interims, particularly on Wednesday. The avalanche danger levels may increase still further from region to region. At high altitude, avalanche conditions are expected to be critical, particularly in western and northern regions.