Avalanche bulletin for Wednesday, 13 January 2016

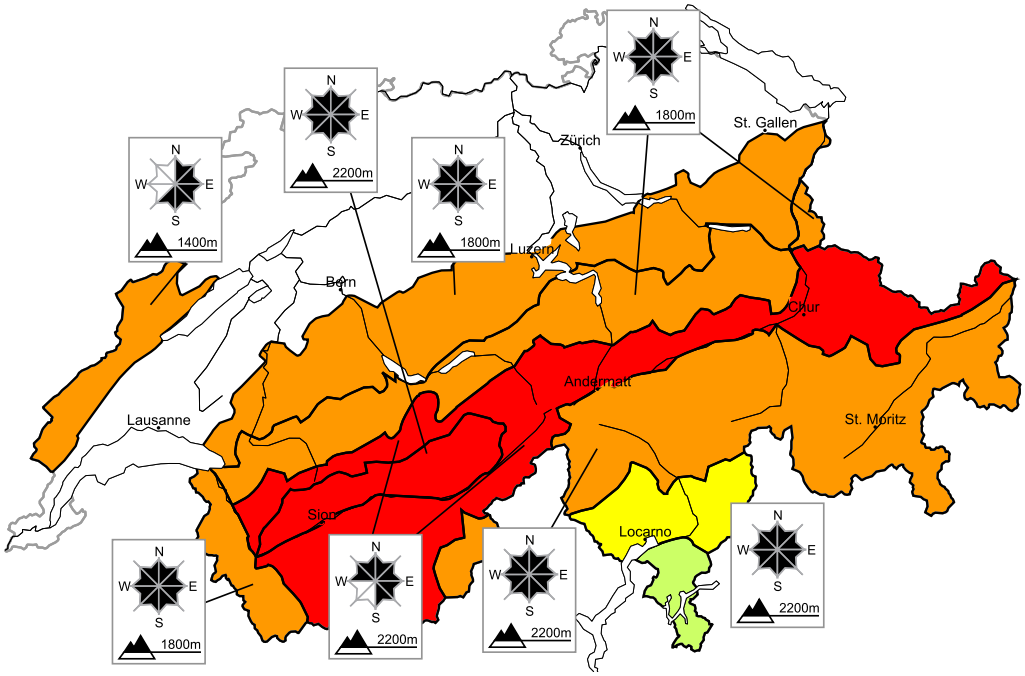
13.1.2016, 07:48

High avalanche danger will be encountered in some regions

Edition: 13.1.2016, 08:00 / Next update: 13.1.2016, 17:00

Avalanche danger

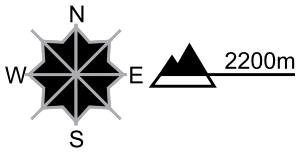
updated on 13.1.2016, 08:00



region A — Level 4, high

Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

A critical avalanche situation will persist. Natural avalanches are to be expected. They can in isolated cases penetrate down to the ground and reach large size. In particular from starting zones at higher altitudes avalanches capable of reaching the valley bottom are possible. Exposed parts of transportation routes are endangered in some cases.
The snow sport conditions outside marked and open pistes are unfavourable. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches easily, including dangerously large ones. Remote triggering is possible.

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

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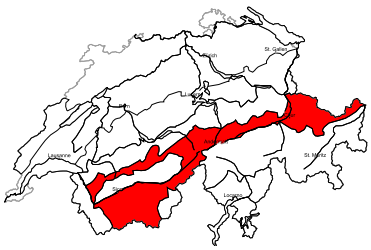
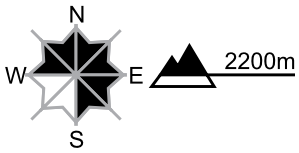
region B — Level 4, high



Old snow, fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



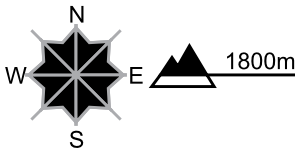
Danger description

The snow sport conditions outside marked and open pistes are critical. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches easily. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. Remote triggering is possible. Natural avalanches are to be expected. Avalanches can penetrate down to the ground and reach dangerously large size. Ski touring and other off-piste activities, including snowshoe hiking, call for great caution and restraint.
Valais: Exposed parts of transportation routes can be endangered.

region C — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



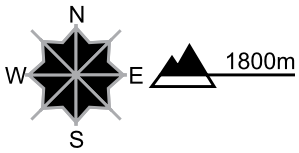
Danger description

In the last few days deep snow drift accumulations have formed. These are prone to triggering. Avalanches can be released, even by a single winter sport participant and reach medium size. Natural avalanches are possible, this applies especially during the night. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

region D — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind the snow drift accumulations will increase in size additionally. The fresh and older snow drift accumulations are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack on shady slopes above approximately 2200 m. Avalanches can be released, even by a single winter sport participant and reach medium size. Remote triggering is possible. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. Natural avalanches are to be expected. Backcountry touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

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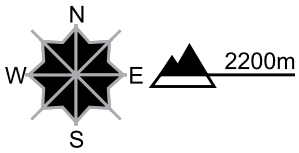
region E — Level 3, considerable

Old snow, snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



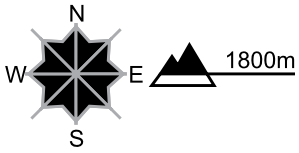
Danger description

The fresh and older snow drift accumulations are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack on shady slopes above approximately 2200 m. Avalanches can be released, even by a single winter sport participant and reach medium size. Remote triggering is possible. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. Mostly small natural avalanches are possible. Backcountry touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

region F — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



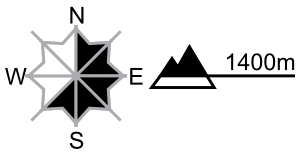
Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and stormy weather the snow drift accumulations will increase in size once again. These are prone to triggering. Avalanches can be released by a single winter sport participant. Ski touring and other off-piste activities, including snowshoe hiking, call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and careful route selection.

region G — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and stormy weather avalanche prone snow drift accumulations will form. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches. Caution is to be exercised in particular adjacent to the ridge line as well as in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Ski touring and snowshoe hiking call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and careful route selection.

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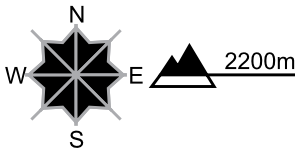
region H — Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of the northerly wind avalanche prone snow drift accumulations will form. Avalanches can in some places be released, even by a single winter sport participant, but they will be small in most cases. Caution is to be exercised in particular adjacent to the ridge line 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 I — Level 1, low

Snow drifts

Only a little snow is lying. Individual avalanche prone locations are to be found 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 12.1.2016, 17:00

Snowpack

Precipitation and strong to storm force winds from the south and west have given rise to snow drift accumulations in recent days. These can very easily be released as avalanches. The accumulations are large in the west and north, but significantly smaller in the southeast.
On north facing slopes at high altitudes and in the high Alpine regions over a wide area, fresh snow and snow drift accumulations have been deposited on a highly faceted and loosely bonded snowpack, which in some places is covered with a layer of surface hoar. For this reason these snow layers have bonded only poorly with the old snowpack underneath. Avalanches can be triggered in the weak interim layer and, especially in the western regions, reach a dangerously large size. Avalanches, either triggered naturally or released by people, and multiple whumpfing sounds, are indications of the precarious avalanche situation.
Below approximately 2200 m the snowpack was moist all the way through, in particular on the northern flank of the Alps and in Valais. Here, a danger is posed only by the fresh snow and snow drift accumulations.

Observed weather on Tuesday, 12.1.2016

The weather was mostly very cloudy with frequent snowfall. During Monday night the snowfall level dropped to low altitudes. It was sunny only in the far south.

Fresh snow

The following amounts of snow fell in the period from Monday afternoon until Tuesday afternoon:
- Northern Alpine ridge from Chablais to the Aletsch region, Vaud and Fribourg Alps, extreme west of Valais and central Valais, Goms, Val Bedretto: 30 bis 50 cm, but as much as 80 cm in Montana and from Trient to the Great St Bernhard Pass
- Remaining areas of the western and central parts of the northern flank of the Alps, and of the main Alpine ridge in Valais: 20 to 30 cm
- Eastern part of the northern flank of the Alps, rest of northern Ticino, northern Grisons, Lower Engadine: 10 to 20 cm
- Central Grisons, Upper Engadine, Grisons southern valleys, central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri: less than 10 cm

In the last three days, 1 to 1.5 metres of snow has fallen in the regions of the extreme west of Valais and northern Valais that have been exposed to heavier precipitation.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m: about -5 °C

Wind

The westerly wind was mostly moderate to strong on the northern flank of the Alps and in Valais, and mostly light to moderate in Ticino and Grisons.

Weather forecast through Wednesday, 13.1.2016

In the north there will be variable to dense cloud cover and snow showers. Bright spells are possible in the inneralpine regions of Grisons. In the afternoon it will become brighter in the west. It will be quite sunny in the south.

Fresh snow

Snow will fall even at low altitudes. In the period to Wednesday evening, the following quantities of fresh snow are expected:
- Northern Alpine ridge, Lower Valais, Goms and from Prättigau to Samnaun: 20 to 40 cm
- Elsewhere: 10 to 20 cm over a wide area, but less in central Grisons and Engadine
- Southern flank of the Alps: mostly dry

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m: -9 °C

Wind

Strong to storm force from the west to northwest

Avalanche bulletin for Wednesday, 13 January 2016

Outlook through Friday, 15.1.2016

After a mostly clear Wednesday night, cloud will build up quickly from the west on Thursday morning and snowfall will commence. In the south the weather will remain dry. On Friday it will snow on the northern flank of the Alps in particular. It will be sunny in the south.
For snow sport participants venturing off piste the situation will remain critical over a wide area.