Avalanche bulletin for Friday, 15 January 2016

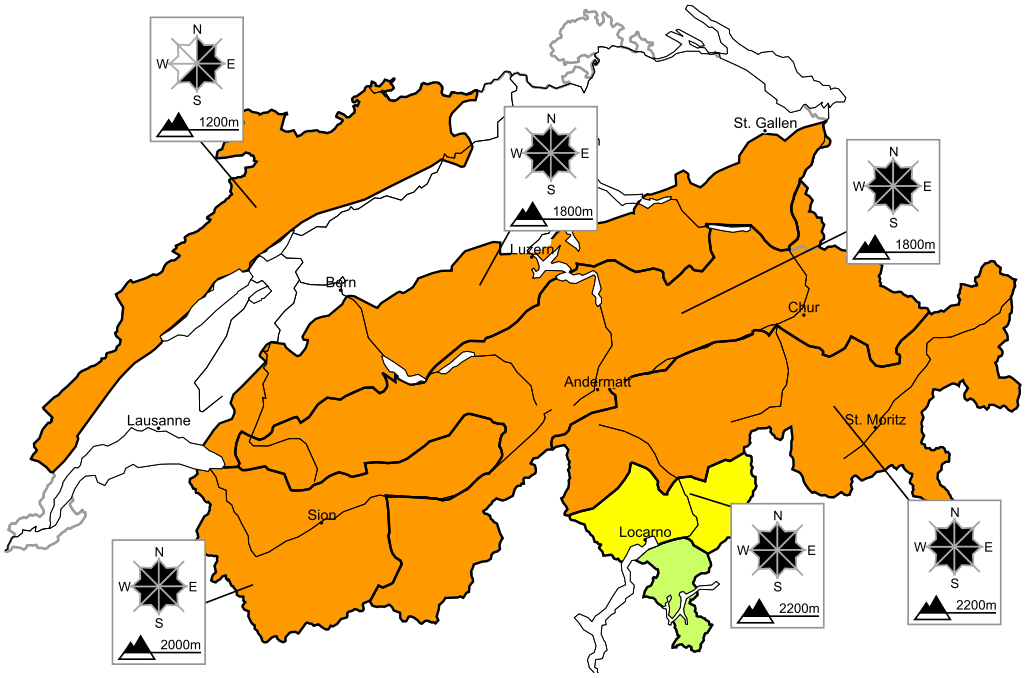
15.1.2016, 07:29

Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area

Edition: 15.1.2016, 08:00 / Next update: 15.1.2016, 17:00

Avalanche danger

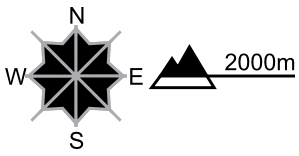
updated on 15.1.2016, 08:00



region A — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The snow drift accumulations must be evaluated with care and prudence. Fresh snow drift accumulations are mostly only small and can in some cases be released easily.
The old snow drift accumulations are thick and can in some cases be released easily especially at their margins. Avalanches can be released by people and reach dangerously large size. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

Full-depth avalanches

Below approximately 2400 m full-depth avalanches are possible. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks. They can be released at any time of day or night.

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

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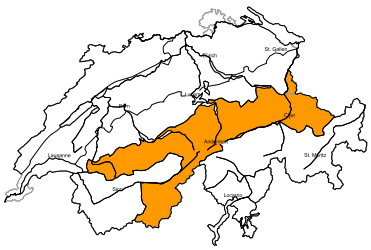
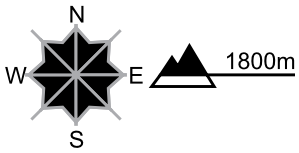
region B — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh and older snow drift accumulations must be evaluated with care and prudence. They are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack above approximately 2200 m, in particular on shady slopes. 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. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

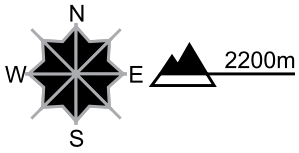
Full-depth avalanches

Western part of the northern flank of the Alps and Valais: Below approximately 2400 m full-depth avalanches are to be expected. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks. They can be released at any time of day or night.

region C — Level 3, considerable

Old snow, snow drifts

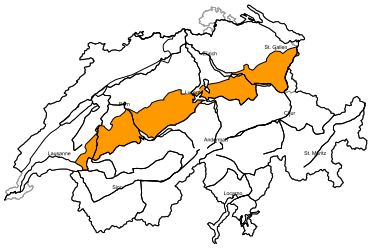
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

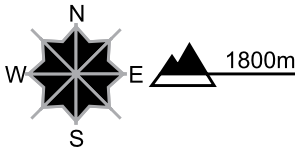
The fresh and older snow drift accumulations are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack on shady slopes above approximately 2200 m. Avalanches can be released, even by a single winter sport participant and reach medium size. Remote triggering is possible. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting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

region D — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Fresh and somewhat older snow drift accumulations can be released by a single winter sport participant in some cases. Caution is to be exercised in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain as well as in pass areas. Ski touring and other off-piste activities, including snowshoe hiking, call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and careful route selection.

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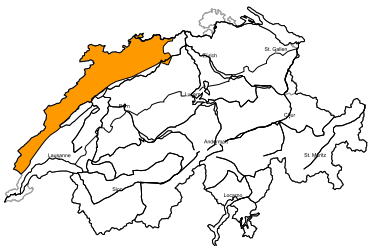
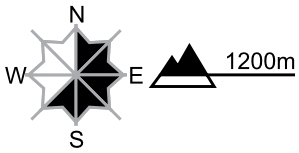
region E — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



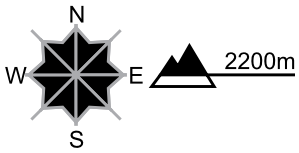
Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind avalanche prone snow drift accumulations have formed. 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.

region F — Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts

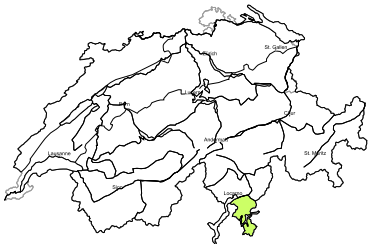
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Fresh and somewhat older snow drift accumulations are in some cases prone to triggering. 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 G — 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 14.1.2016, 17:00

Snowpack

In western regions the large amounts of new fallen snow of the last few days are settling and consolidating. The fresh fallen and freshly drifted snow over widespread areas on north-facing slopes at high and high alpine altitudes has generally been deposited on top of a heavily faceted, loosely-packed snow cover layer. Whereas in those regions where the snowfall has been heavy the likelihood of this layer triggering has diminished in the interim, in the other regions where snowfall has not been as heavy, avalanche triggerings continue to be expected from this weakened layer. For that reason, the avalanche situation remains treacherous in those regions. Avalanches which release in the uppermost layers of the snowpack can fracture and break down to more deeply embedded layers and thereby attain dangerously large size. Settling noises ("whumpf") and remote triggerings are indicators of just how delicate the avalanche scenario currently is. Below approximately 2200 m on the northern flank of the Alps and in the Valais, more than anywhere else, the snow cover is thoroughly wet. In those regions, the peril stems only from new fallen and newly drifted snow.
Whereas following the period of snowfall, which lasted several days, the western regions now have snow depths which correspond to the expected amounts of the season, or even better, in regions such as central Grisons, Engadine and the southern valleys of Grisons in particular, as well as in Ticino, there is still too little snow for this juncture of the season. Particularly in the Valais and on the northern flank of the Alps, the snow distribution is highly irregular. In wind-exposed terrain, the snow cover has been thoroughly whipped up and transported by the wind.

Observed weather on Thursday, 14.1.2016

Following a night of predominantly clear skies, cloud cover moved in from the west during the morning and in northern regions snowfall set in.

Fresh snow
In northern regions, only a few centimeters down to low altitudes.

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m, approximately -7 °C.

Wind
Following a night of predominantly light to moderate southwesterly winds, wind strengths tended to intensify somewhat during the course of the day.

Weather forecast through Friday, 15.1.2016

On Friday in northern regions, conditions will be variable, accompanied by snow showers, particularly on the northern flank of the Alps. In southern regions, it will be sunny for the most part.

Fresh snow
By Friday evening, the following amounts of new fallen snow are expected:
· central and eastern sectors of the northern flank of the Alps: 15 to 30 cm
· in other regions, 5 to 15 cm over widespread areas; in the furthermost southern regions it will remain dry.

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m, between -12 °C in northern regions and -9 °C in southern regions.

Wind
Winds will be northwesterly, blowing at moderate to strong velocity.

Outlook through Sunday, 17.1.2016

On the weekend in northern regions, skies will remain overcast, accompanied by snow showers; in southern regions it will be sunny by and large. As a result of northerly winds, it will turn wintery cold. The avalanche scenario is expected to remain treacherous over widespread areas.