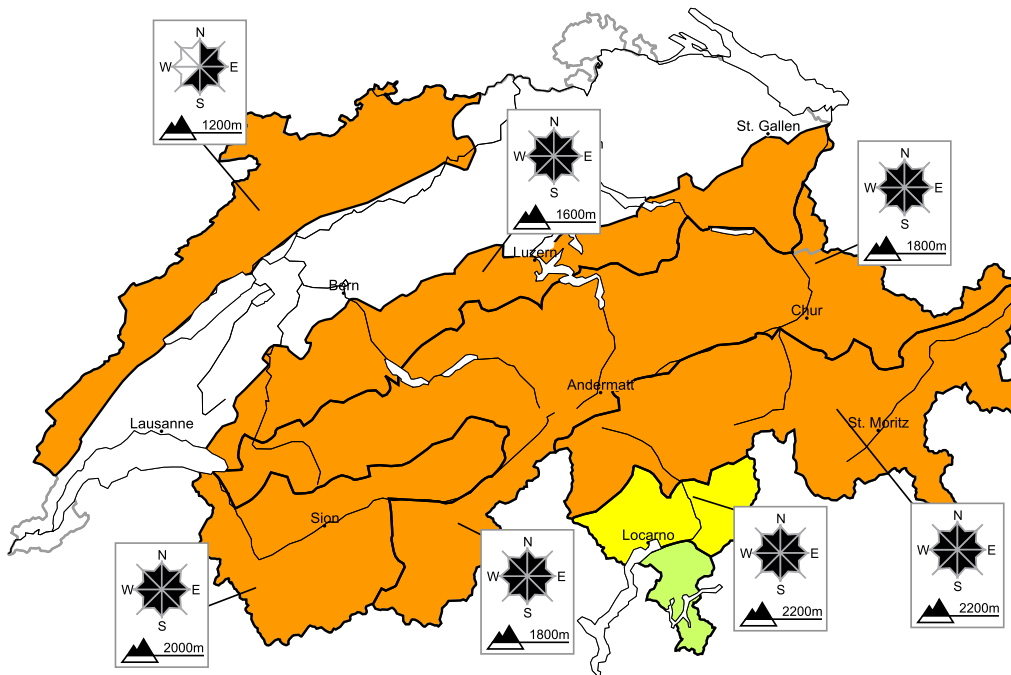


For those venturing off piste a critical avalanche situation will be encountered over a wide area

Edition: 16.1.2016, 08:00 / Next update: 16.1.2016, 17:00

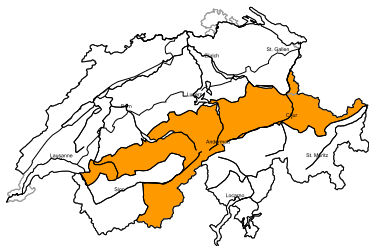
Avalanche danger

updated on 16.1.2016, 08:00



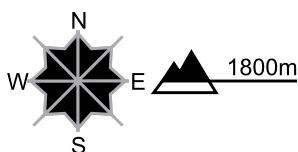
region A

Level 3, considerable



Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



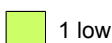
Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations of the last few days are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack in particular on shady slopes above approximately 2200 m. Avalanches can be released, even by a single winter sport participant or triggered naturally. They can reach dangerously large size. Remote triggering is possible. Whumphing 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 great caution and restraint.

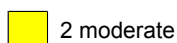
Full-depth avalanches

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.

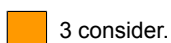
Danger levels



1 low



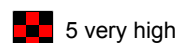
2 moderate



3 consider.



4 high

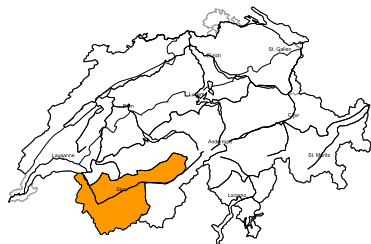


5 very high



region B

Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Fresh snow drift accumulations are mostly small but can be released easily. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain.

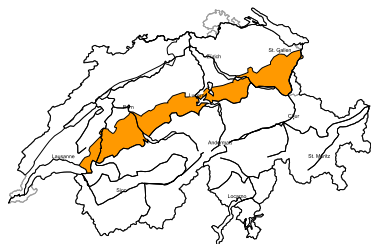
To some extent avalanches can also be released in deep layers and reach dangerously large size. This applies in particular in areas where the snow cover is rather shallow as well as at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

Full-depth avalanches

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

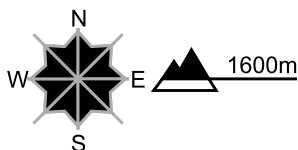
region C

Level 3, considerable



Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations

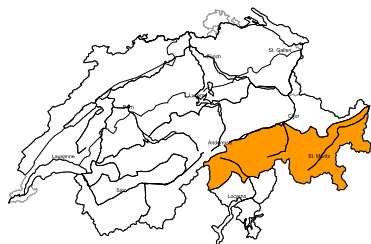


Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations can be released by a single winter sport participant. 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.

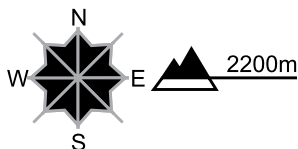
region D

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. Whumpung 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.

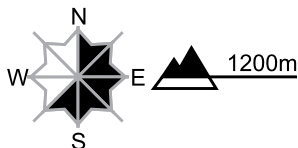
region E

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. They are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Ski touring and snowshoe hiking call for careful route selection.

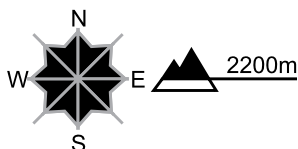
region F

Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations

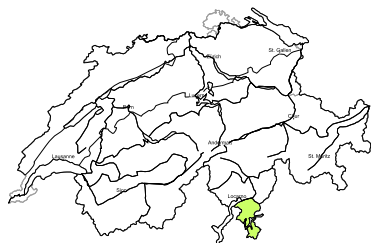


Danger description

As a consequence of the northerly wind avalanche prone snow drift accumulations will form. These 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 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.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 15.1.2016, 17:00

Snowpack

Winds were blowing frequently at strong velocity on Friday, transporting both the new fallen snow and the loosely-packed old now. The snow was transported all the way down to intermediate altitudes as well.

Above approximately 2200 m, on shady slopes more than anywhere else, the lowermost layers of the snow cover are composed of faceted snow crystals and are extremely weak. In the regions of the west which had the heaviest snowfall, these weak layers have already been so heavily blanketed with subsequent snowfall that their triggering is quite improbable, if at all then by large additional loading or in transitions from shallow to deep snow. In the other regions, avalanches can still be triggered from these weak layers. In addition, avalanches which release near to the uppermost surface of the snowpack can then 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 treacherous the avalanche situation currently is.

Below approximately 2200 m, the base layers of the snowpack, particularly on the northern flank of the Alps and in the Valais, have already been moist once. In those regions, the peril stems primarily from the new fallen and newly drifted snow of the last few days.

In the western regions, snow depths correspond to average or slightly above average values for this juncture of the season. Whereas in central Grisons, in the Engadine and in southern regions, there is still too little snow for this point of the season.

Observed weather on Friday, 15.1.2016

During the night in northern regions there was snowfall down to low altitudes. In the early morning hours in western regions it turned temporarily sunny, subsequently cloud cover moved in again. In eastern regions there were bright intervals in the afternoon. In southern regions it was sunny for the most part.

Fresh snow

Between Thursday afternoon and Friday afternoon, the following amounts of new fallen snow were registered:

- Vaud Alps, northern part of Lower Valais, central and eastern sectors of the northern flank of the Alps: 20 to 30 cm
- remaining sectors of the northern flank of the Alps, southern part of Lower Valais: 10 to 20 cm
- in other regions, less; in the furthestmost southern regions it was dry

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, -12 °C in northern regions and -8 °C in southern regions.

Wind

Winds were frequently strong, initially from the west, shifting during the course of the day to northwesterly.

Weather forecast through Saturday, 16.1.2016

On Saturday, skies will be heavily overcast and snowfall down to low lying areas is anticipated. In the furthestmost southern regions it will be predominantly sunny.

Fresh snow

By Saturday evening, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow are expected:

- central and eastern sectors of the northern flank of the Alps: 20 to 30 cm
- remaining regions north of an imaginary Rhine-Rhone line, northern Grisons and Samnaun: 10 to 20 cm
- in other regions, less than 10 cm; in the furthestmost southern regions it will remain dry

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, a wintery -12 °C

Wind

Winds will be northwesterly to northerly, blowing at moderate strength for the most part in western regions; at strong to storm strength at high altitudes in eastern regions and on the southern flank of the Alps.

Outlook through Monday, 18.1.2016

Sunday

The northerly winds will be blowing at strong to storm velocity. Skies will be overcast for the most part and snowfall is expected down to low lying areas, most of which is once again expected on the northern flank of the Alps. In the furthest southern regions it will be sunny by and large. The avalanche danger is expected to increase somewhat further in northern regions. In southern regions it is not expected to change significantly.

Monday

In northern regions it will be rather sunny, in southern regions pleasant. The avalanche danger will diminish only incrementally. For backcountry winter sports, conditions in outlying terrain away from secured ski runs remain treacherous.