Avalanche bulletin for Sunday, 21 February 2016

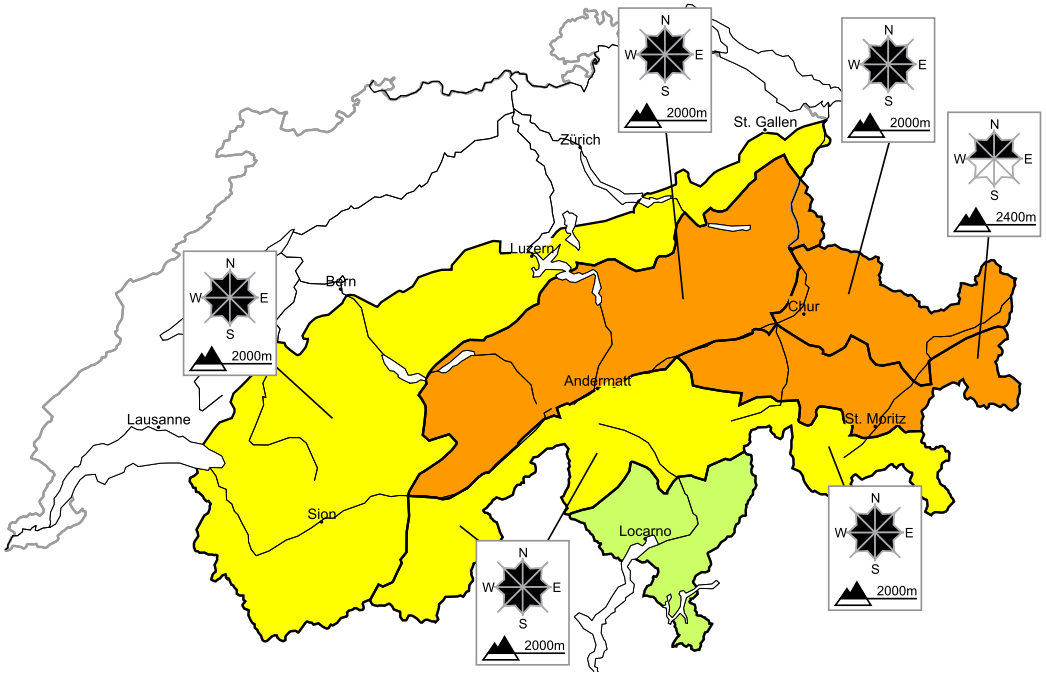
21.2.2016, 07:52

Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area

Edition: 21.2.2016, 08:00 / Next update: 21.2.2016, 17:00

Avalanche danger

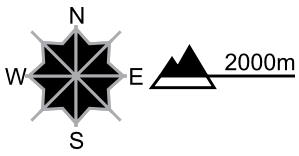
updated on 21.2.2016, 08:00



region A — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

A lot more fresh snow than expected: As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind snow drift accumulations have formed. These can be released by a single winter sport participant. Natural avalanches are possible. Additionally avalanches can also be released in near-ground layers and reach dangerously large size. These avalanche prone locations are rare. They are to be found in particular on wind-protected shady slopes and at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack. Backcountry touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and careful route selection.

Wet and full-depth avalanches

Mostly small full-depth and wet avalanches are possible below approximately 2000 m. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

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

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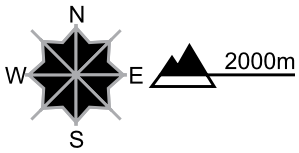
region B — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind snow drift accumulations have formed. These can be released, even by a single winter sport participant and reach medium size. Natural avalanches are possible. Backcountry touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

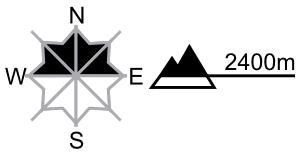
Wet and full-depth avalanches

Full-depth and wet avalanches are possible below approximately 2000 m. In the west these can reach medium size. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

region C — Level 3, considerable

Old snow, snow drifts

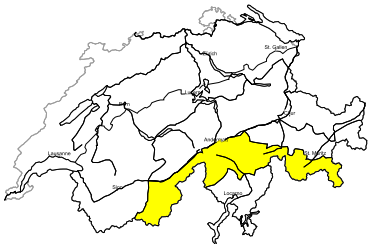
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

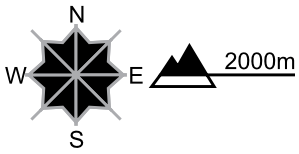
Avalanches can be released in near-ground layers and reach dangerously large size. The avalanche prone locations are to be found especially in shady places that are protected from the wind and at transitions into gullies and bowls. In little used backcountry terrain avalanche prone locations are more prevalent. Avalanches can be released by a single winter sport participant. Remote triggering is possible.
In addition, easily released snow drift accumulations have formed. These are to be found adjacent to the ridge line in all aspects.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

region D — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of the strong wind snow drift accumulations have formed. These can be released easily. The number and size of avalanche prone locations will increase with altitude.
Additionally avalanches can also be released in near-ground layers and reach dangerously large size. These avalanche prone locations are rare. They are to be found in particular on wind-protected shady slopes and at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack.
Careful route selection and spacing between individuals are recommended.

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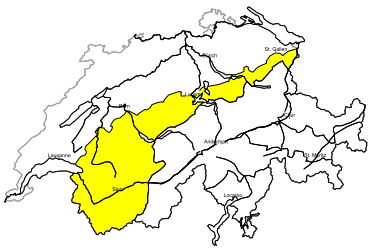
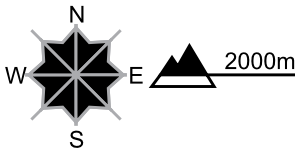
region E — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



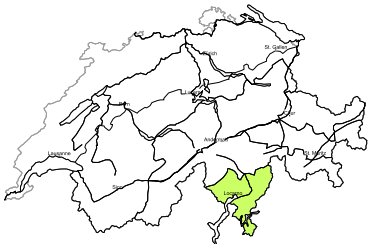
Danger description

As a consequence of the strong wind snow drift accumulations have formed. These are mostly small but can be released easily. The number and size of avalanche prone locations will increase with altitude. The snow drift accumulations are to be avoided. Backcountry touring calls for careful route selection.

Wet and full-depth avalanches

Full-depth and wet avalanches are possible below approximately 2000 m. In the west these can reach medium size. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

region F — Level 1, low



Favourable situation

Individual avalanche prone locations are to be found especially on extremely steep slopes. Restraint should be exercised because avalanches can sweep people along and give rise to falls.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 20.2.2016, 17:00

Snowpack

As a consequence of strong velocity winds, snowdrift accumulations formed on Saturday. These drifted masses tend to be small-sized except for in the regions of the north where snowfall has been heavy. On Sunday, additional relatively small-sized snowdrift accumulations will form.
In addition, more than anywhere else in the southern part of Upper Valais, in Ticino, in the inneralpine regions of Grisons and in the Engadine, avalanches can also trigger in the deeply embedded or ground-level layers of the snowpack which are riddled with faceted snow crystals. This hazard threatens primarily on north-facing slopes above approximately 2200 m. In the regions of the west and the north where snowfall has been heaviest, the snowpack structure is often favourable. Thus, it is far less likely that avalanches will trigger from these deeply embedded layers.
As a result of the mild temperatures on Sunday, moist sluffs, snowslides and small avalanches can be expected on very steep, sun-bathed slopes.

Observed weather on Saturday, 20.2.2016

In northern regions, skies were heavily overcast. During the morning precipitation set in. In eastern regions skies were still bright in the early morning hours, subsequently it began to snow there as well. The snowfall level ascended in altitude during the afternoon from low lying areas up to nearly 1700 m. In southern regions it was quite sunny.

Fresh snow

Between Friday evening and Saturday evening above approximately 2000 m, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow were registered:
· central and eastern sectors of northern flank of the Alps: 10 to 20 cm
· western sector of northern flank of the Alps, Valais, northern Ticino, Grisons: 5 to 10 cm; in other regions it remained dry.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, -3 °C.

Wind

· In northern regions, winds were blowing from westerly directions at predominantly moderate strength.
· On the southern flank of the Alps and in the Engadine, winds were northwesterly, blowing at moderate velocity.

Weather forecast through Sunday, 21.2.2016

To begin with, a small amount of additional snowfall is anticipated in northern regions above approximately 1700 m. In western and southern regions, nocturnal skies will be clear. During the daytime it will be sunny everywhere in Switzerland and very mild, the zero-degree level in the afternoon at 3000 m.

Fresh snow

In the early part of the night, the following amounts of new fallen snow are anticipated:
· central and eastern sectors of northern flank of the Alps, Prättigau, Silvretta, Samnaun: 10 to 20 cm
· in other regions, less; in the furthermost western regions and in the south it will remain dry.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, between +5 °C in western and southern regions and +2 °C in eastern regions.

Wind

Winds will be westerly to northwesterly, blowing at strong to storm velocity.

Outlook through Tuesday, 23.2.2016

On Monday, following a night of clear skies, it will be sunny and ongoingly mild to begin with. In the afternoon, cloud cover will move in. A westerly wind will be blowing at strong velocity. On Tuesday in northern regions, skies will be heavily overcast and a small amount of snowfall is anticipated above approximately 1400 m. In southern regions it will be sunny for the most part. The wind is expected to slacken off.
The danger of dry avalanches is expected to diminish. Particularly in the regions of the west where snowfall has been heaviest, small-to-medium sized gliding avalanches can be unleashed at any time of day or night.