Avalanche bulletin for Monday, 22 February 2016

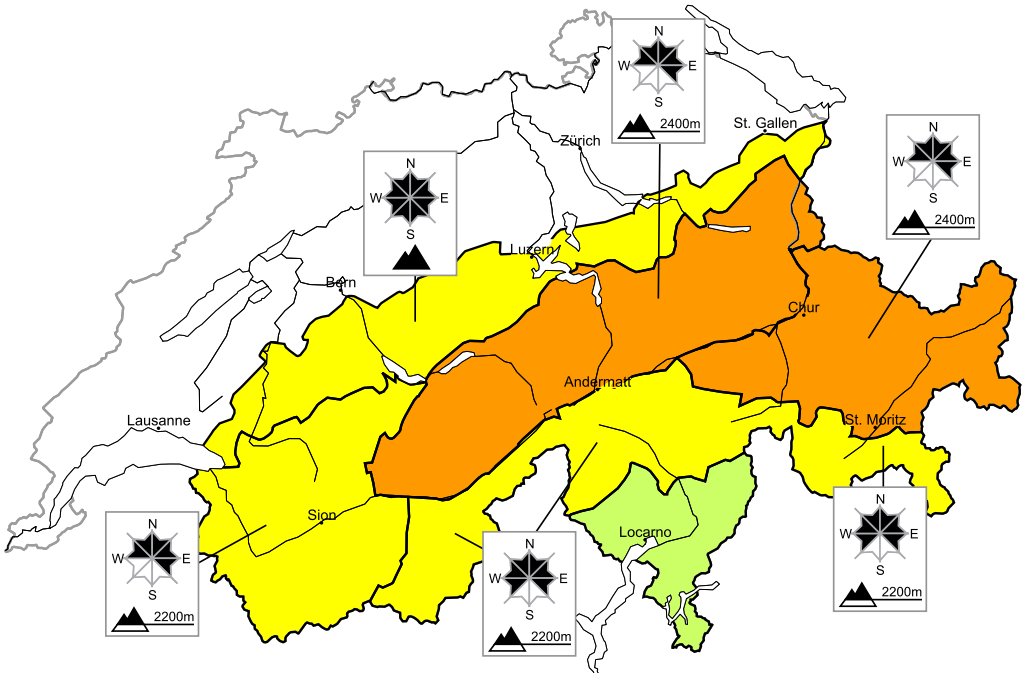
22.2.2016, 07:28

Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area

Edition: 22.2.2016, 08:00 / Next update: 22.2.2016, 17:00

Avalanche danger

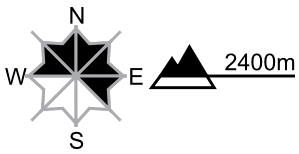
updated on 22.2.2016, 08:00



region A — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

In the last two days mostly small snow drift accumulations have formed. These are in some cases still prone to triggering.
Additionally avalanches can be released in near-ground layers and reach dangerously large size. These avalanche prone locations are to be found especially in 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.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

Wet and full-depth avalanches

Mostly small full-depth and wet avalanches are possible below approximately 2200 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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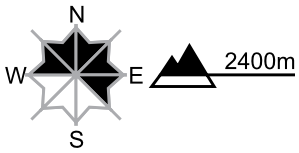
region B — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



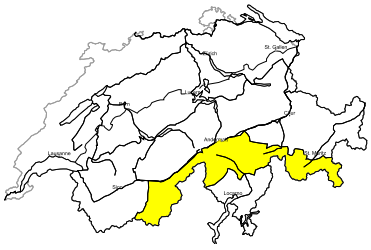
Danger description

In the last two days snow drift accumulations have formed. These can be released by a single winter sport participant. Avalanches can in some cases reach medium size. The snow drift accumulations are to be avoided. Backcountry touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Wet and full-depth avalanches

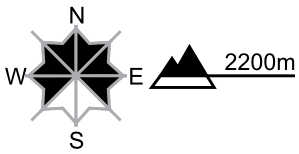
Full-depth and wet avalanches are possible below approximately 2200 m. In the west these can reach medium size. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

region C — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



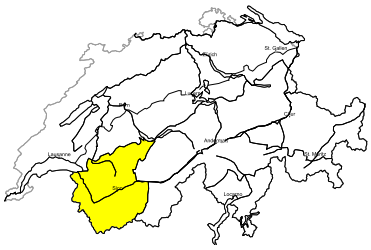
Danger description

In the last two days snow drift accumulations have formed. These are in some cases still prone to triggering. 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.

Wet and full-depth avalanches

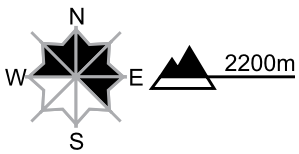
Mostly small full-depth and wet avalanches are possible below approximately 2200 m. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

region D — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

In the last two days snow drift accumulations have formed. These are in some cases still prone to triggering. The number and size of avalanche prone locations will increase with altitude. In high Alpine regions the danger is higher. 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 2200 m. These can reach medium size. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

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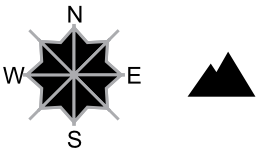
region E — Level 2, moderate

Wet and full-depth avalanches

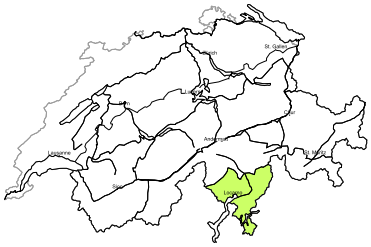
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Full-depth and wet avalanches are possible. 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 21.2.2016, 17:00

Snowpack

Snowdrift accumulations have formed during the last two days as a consequence of strong-velocity westerly winds. These drifted masses are stabilising to an increasing degree as a result of the warm temperatures, nonetheless continue to be prone to triggering on shady slopes above approximately 2400 m.
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 2400 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, a sizeable number of wet-snow and gliding avalanches released, most of them small-sized, on very steep, sun-bathed slopes. The naturally triggered dry-snow avalanches which released encompassed the layers of the snowpack closest to the uppermost surface for the most part, in the regions where the ground-level layer of the snowpack is weakened they sometimes fractured all the way down to the ground.

Observed weather on Sunday, 21.2.2016

In western and southern regions it was sunny on Sunday, following a night of clear skies. Precipitation came to an end during the night, including in eastern regions. By the end of the latest round of precipitation, the snowfall level had ascended to nearly 2300 m. During the daytime it became increasingly sunny.

Fresh snow

Between Saturday morning and Sunday morning above approximately 2400 m, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow were registered:

- northern flank of the Alps from the eastern Bernese Oberland into the Glarner Alps, eastern Goms, Prättigau, Davos, Silvretta, Samnaun: 20 to 40 cm;
- remaining sectors of the northern flank of the Alps, remaining parts of Valais, Bedretto, remaining parts of northern and central Grisons, remaining parts of Upper Engadine: 10 to 20 cm;
- in other regions, less; in southern regions it remained dry.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, between +5 °C in northern regions and +8 °C in southern regions.

Wind

Winds were westerly to northwesterly, during the night in the furthermost southern regions blowing at strong to storm strength, during the day at moderate to strong velocity.

Weather forecast through Monday, 22.2.2016

Following a night of predominantly clear skies it will be sunny and very mild to start with. During the afternoon, cloud cover is expected to move in from the southwest.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, +5 °C.

Wind

Winds will be southwesterly to westerly, blowing in northern regions at strong velocity, in southern regions at moderate strength.

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Outlook through Wednesday, 24.2.2016

Between Tuesday night and Wednesday morning in northern regions, repeated bouts of snowfall are anticipated, bringing only small amounts of new fallen snow. The snowfall level will descend from 1400 m down to low lying areas. On Wednesday it will become increasingly sunny from the west once again. On Tuesday in southern regions, skies will be overcast; on Wednesday, quite sunny.
Winds will be westerly on Tuesday, blowing at moderate to strong velocity; on Wednesday they will shift to northwesterly.
The danger of dry-snow avalanches is expected to increase somewhat in northern regions as a result of the new fallen snow. Small and medium-sized gliding avalanches can release at any time of day or night more than anywhere else in the regions of the west where snowfall has been heaviest. Wet-snow avalanches are no longer to be expected, due to the significantly lower temperatures.