Avalanche bulletin for Sunday, 28 February 2016

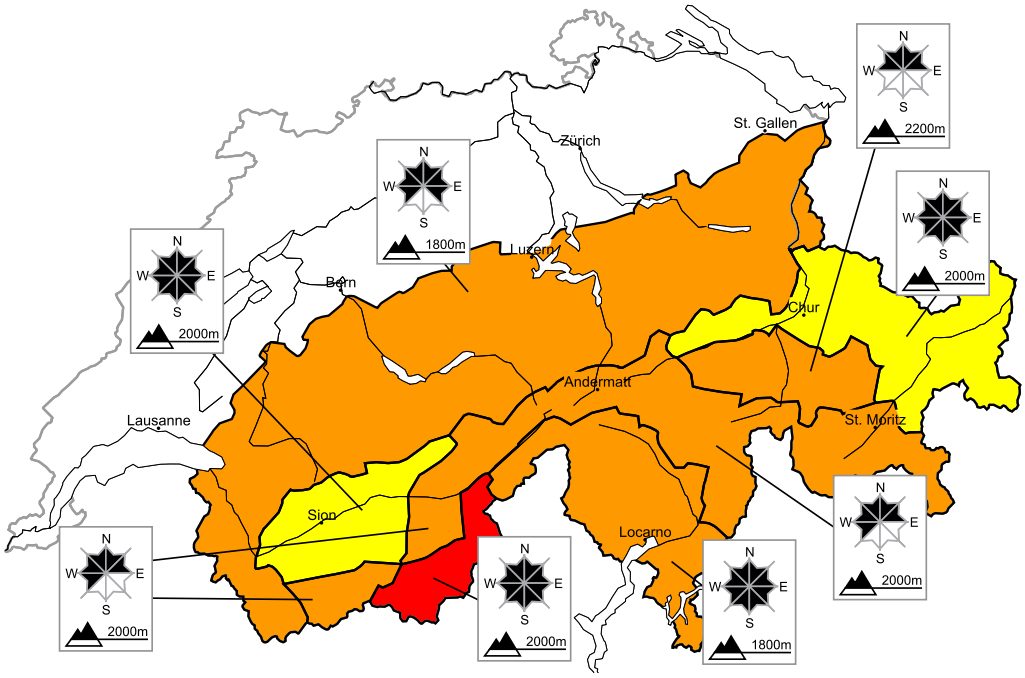
28.2.2016, 07:45

In southern Upper Valais a high avalanche danger will be encountered in some regions

Edition: 28.2.2016, 08:00 / Next update: 28.2.2016, 17:00

Avalanche danger

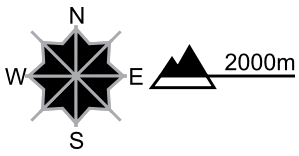
updated on 28.2.2016, 08:00



region A | **Level 4, high**

Fresh snow, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The southerly wind will transport the fresh snow significantly. The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are prone to triggering. In particular on steep west, north and east facing slopes avalanches can be released in the weakly bonded old snow and reach large size. Numerous medium-sized and, in isolated cases, large natural avalanches are to be expected. Transportation routes situated at higher altitudes in particular are endangered. The conditions are very critical for snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes.

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

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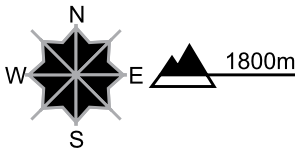
region B — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow, old snow

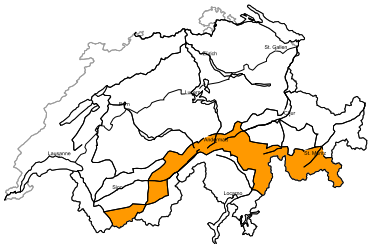
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

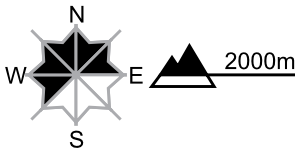
The southerly wind will transport the fresh snow significantly. The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are prone to triggering. Small and medium-sized natural avalanches are to be expected. Avalanches can be released in the weakly bonded old snow and reach large size in isolated cases. Exposed parts of transportation routes can be endangered. Backcountry touring calls for experience and restraint.

region C — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts, old snow

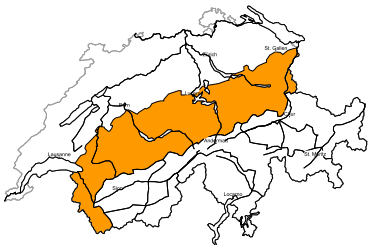
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

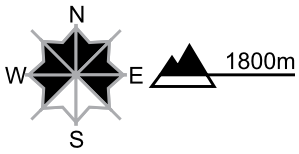
The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations can be released by a single winter sport participant. They can in some cases penetrate deep layers and reach medium size. Small and, in isolated cases, medium-sized natural avalanches are possible. Backcountry touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

region D — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

During the night the snow drift accumulations will increase in size additionally. The fresh snow drift accumulations can be released, even by a single winter sport participant. Small to medium-sized natural avalanches are possible in particular in the regions exposed to the foehn wind. Backcountry touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger. The fresh snow drift accumulations are to be avoided.

Full-depth avalanches

Individual medium-sized full-depth avalanches are possible below approximately 2400 m.

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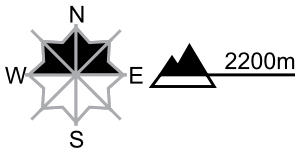
region E — Level 3, considerable

Old snow, snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations

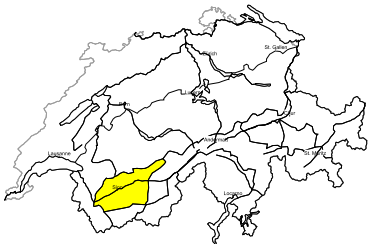


Danger description

Avalanches can be released in near-ground layers and reach dangerously large size. 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 in some places be released by a single winter sport participant.

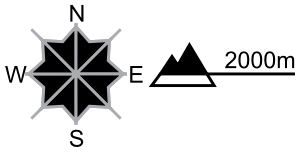
The fresh snow drift accumulations are mostly small but to be assessed with care and prudence.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

region F — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

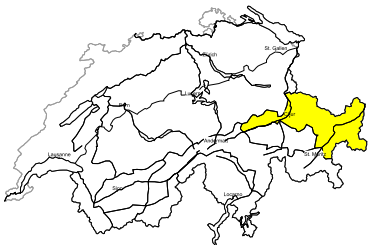
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

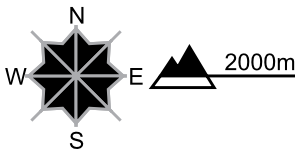
The fresh snow drift accumulations are mostly small and in some cases prone to triggering. They are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Backcountry touring calls for careful route selection. In high Alpine regions avalanche prone locations are more prevalent and the danger is greater. The snow drift accumulations are to be evaluated with care and prudence.

region G — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow drift accumulations are mostly small but in some cases prone to triggering. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence.
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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Snowpack and weather

updated on 27.2.2016, 17:00

Snowpack

As a consequence of strong velocity southerly winds, the fresh fallen snow in southern regions and the still loosely-packed old snow in northern regions is being whipped up and transported. The snowdrift accumulations which form as a result of this transport are very prone to triggering. Several avalanches have been triggered which involved people. Snowdrift accumulations are continually forming, growing and spreading.
Weakened, unfavourably structured layers more deeply embedded inside the snowpack are found over widespread areas in the southern part of Upper Valais, in Ticino, in the inneralpine regions of Grisons and in the Engadine. In those regions, avalanches can fracture down to the ground-level layers, which are riddled with loosely-packed, faceted snow crystals, and thereby could easily grow to medium size. This danger threatens particularly on north-facing slopes above approximately 2400 m. In the remaining regions of Switzerland, the snow structure is frequently favourable (not including the most recently deposited layers of snowdrift). Thus, it is unlikely that avalanches will fracture down to these deeply embedded or ground-level layers.
Below approximately 2200 m the old snowpack is moist over widespread areas (on steep, south-facing slopes, below approximately 2500 m).

Observed weather on Saturday, 27.2.2016

On the southern flank of the Alps, skies were heavily overcast. In the Simplon region and in Ticino, there was snowfall above approximately 1000 m which persisted until midday. In northern regions it was quite sunny to begin with; in the afternoon, skies turned increasingly overcast.

Fresh snow

- Simplon region, northern and central parts of Ticino: 10 to 20 cm;
- remaining sectors of Main Alpine Ridge from the Zermatt region into the Bernina region, southern part of Ticino: only a few centimeters.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, between -2 °C in northern regions and -5 °C in southern regions.

Wind

In regions north of an imaginary Rhine-Rhone line, winds were southerly, blowing at moderate to strong velocity; intensifying to strong to storm-strength foehn winds during the course of the day.
Further to the south, winds were southerly, blowing at light to moderate strength.

Avalanche bulletin for Sunday, 28 February 2016

Weather forecast through Sunday, 28.2.2016

On Saturday evening in southern regions, the snowfall is expected to intensify. In the Upper Valais sector of the Main Alpine Ridge and in Ticino, snowfall will be heavy and long enduring. The snowfall level will be 600 to 1000 m; in Sotto Ceneri the snowfall level will ascend to 1400 m. In northern regions, skies will be variably cloudy during the morning, accompanied by bright intervals; in the afternoon, skies will become heavily overcast by and large.

Fresh snow

Between Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon above approximately 1600 m, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow are anticipated:

- Zermatt, Saas Fee and the southern part of the Simplon region: 60 to 90 cm;
- northern part of the Simplon region, southern Goms, Beddretto, valleys of Maggia, central Ticino, Sotto Ceneri: 30 to 60 cm;
- remaining sectors of the Main Alpine Ridge from Great St. Bernard into the Bernina region, as well as the remaining sectors of the southern flank of the Alps: 10 to 30 cm; in the regions bordering to the north, less.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, between +1 °C in northern regions and -2 °C in southern regions.

Wind

During the night, winds will be southerly-to-southeasterly, blowing at strong to storm velocity in southern and eastern regions in particular; during the course of the day the foehn scenario will come to an end, winds shift to easterly and be blowing at moderate strength.

Outlook through Tuesday, 1.3.2016

Monday

Skies are expected to be heavily overcast and snowfall is anticipated widespread. Winds will shift to northerly-to-northeasterly. The snowfall level will descend down to low lying areas. The avalanche danger is expected to diminish somewhat in southern and western regions; in northeastern regions, danger levels are expected to increase from region to region.

Tuesday

In western regions it will be partly sunny, in southern regions predominantly so. In eastern regions skies will be heavily overcast; the snowfall is expected to come to an end during the course of the day. The avalanche danger levels are not expected to change significantly.