Avalanche bulletin for Saturday, 12 March 2016

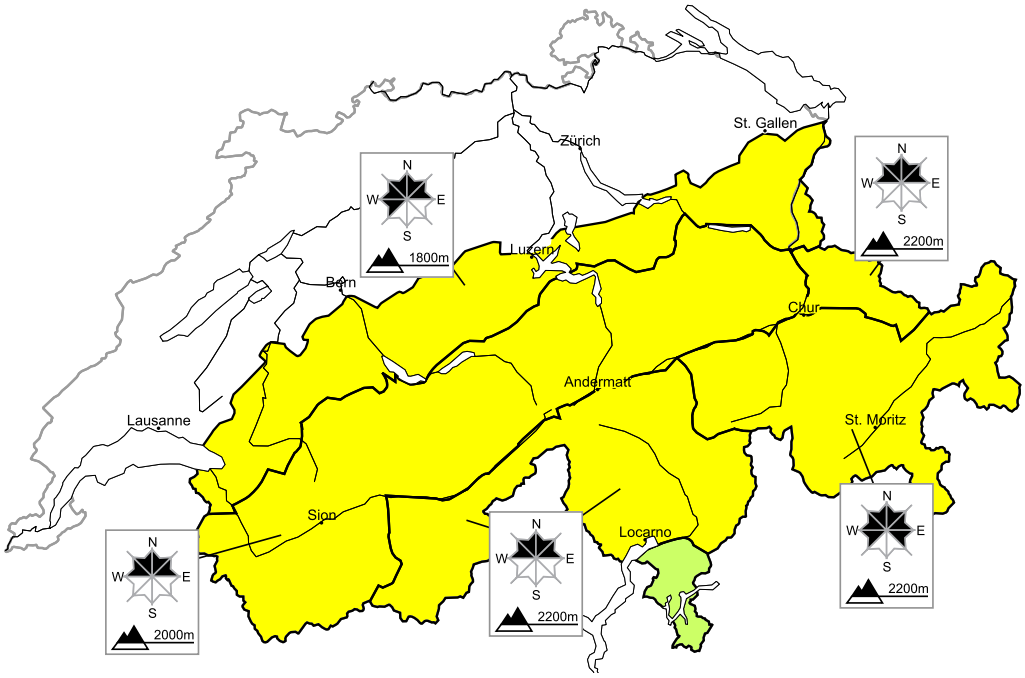
12.3.2016, 07:20

Moderate avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area. Weakly bonded old snow in Grisons

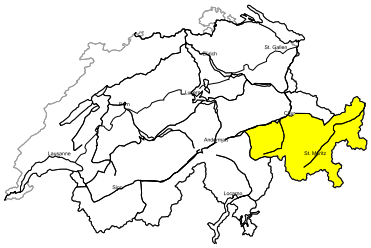
Edition: 12.3.2016, 08:00 / Next update: 12.3.2016, 17:00

Avalanche danger

updated on 12.3.2016, 08:00

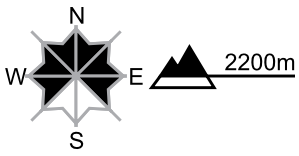


region A | **Level 2, moderate**



Old snow, snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The older snow drift accumulations are in some cases still prone to triggering. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain.
Additionally avalanches can be triggered in near-ground layers and reach dangerously large size. These avalanche prone locations are rather rare but barely recognisable, even to the trained eye. They are to be found in particular on little used, rather lightly snow-covered shady slopes and at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack above approximately 2400 m. Careful route selection is important. Steep north facing slopes are to be traversed by snow sport participants one at a time.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

As a consequence of solar radiation individual moist snow slides are possible as the day progresses. This applies in particular on very steep south facing slopes below approximately 2500 m.

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

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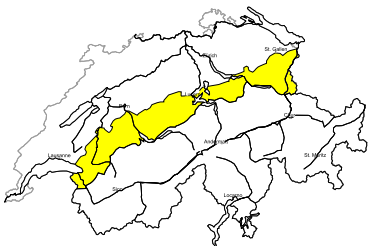
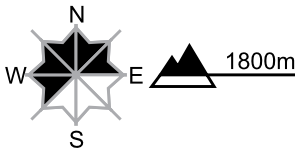
region B — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



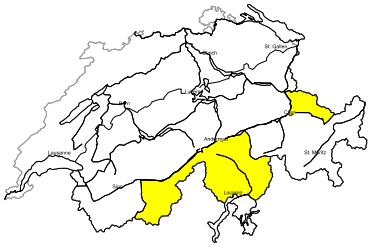
Danger description

As a consequence of the Bise wind snow drift accumulations have formed. These are rather small but in some cases prone to triggering. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain.

Wet avalanches as day progresses, Full-depth avalanches

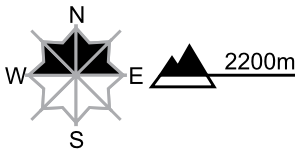
As a consequence of solar radiation individual moist snow slides are possible as the day progresses. This applies in particular on very steep south facing slopes. Full-depth avalanches are possible in particular on steep grassy slopes.

region C — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The older snow drift accumulations can still be released in some cases.
In isolated cases avalanches can penetrate deep layers and reach dangerously large size, especially on north facing slopes above approximately 2400 m. These avalanche prone locations are rare. They are to be found in particular on little used, rather lightly snow-covered shady slopes and at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack.
Careful route selection is recommended.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

As a consequence of solar radiation individual moist snow slides are possible as the day progresses. This applies in particular on very steep south facing slopes below approximately 2500 m.

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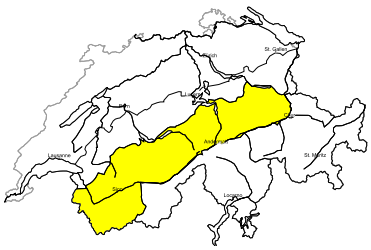
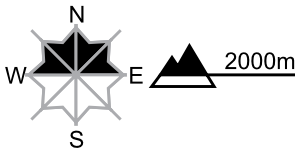
region D — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



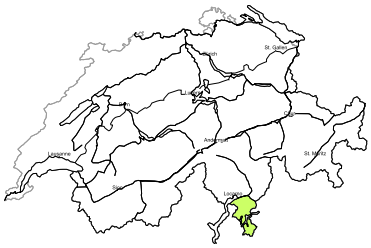
Danger description

The older snow drift accumulations can still be released in some cases. This applies in particular in case of a large load. Careful route selection is recommended.

Wet avalanches as day progresses, Full-depth avalanches

As a consequence of solar radiation individual moist snow slides are possible as the day progresses. This applies in particular on very steep south facing slopes below approximately 2500 m. Full-depth avalanches are possible in particular on steep grassy slopes.

region E — Level 1, low



Favourable situation

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

Wet avalanches as day progresses

As a consequence of solar radiation individual moist snow slides are possible as the day progresses. This applies in particular on very steep south facing slopes.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 11.3.2016, 17:00

Snowpack

On Friday, snowdrift accumulations formed anew in the Prealps more than anywhere else as a result of the bise winds. The drifted masses tend to be relatively small-sized, however are in some places prone to triggering. Older snowdrift accumulations are becoming increasingly more stable.
Deeply embedded layers inside the snow cover near the ground are riddled with faceted snow crystals over widespread areas in southern Upper Valais, in northern Ticino, in the inneralpine regions of Grisons, in the Engadine and in the southern valleys of Grisons. In those regions, avalanches in some places can fracture down to these weakened layers and thereby grow to dangerously large size, particularly on north-facing slopes above approximately 2400 m. In the other regions, it is far less likely that a dry avalanche will fracture down to these deeply embedded layers near the ground.
The uppermost surface of the snowpack is frequently heavily wind impacted and highly irregular, in high alpine regions more than anywhere else. In other regions the uppermost surface layer is often powdery, particularly on wind-protected north-facing slopes. On steep, south-facing slopes a crust forms during the nights which in most cases is incapable of bearing loads. These crusts tend to melt during the daytime as a result of solar radiation, which in turn makes moist sluffs possible.

Observed weather on Friday, 11.3.2016

In northern regions below approximately 2000 m, skies were overcast with cloud cover resembling high fog. Above that altitude and in the other regions in general, it was relatively sunny. Intermittent high altitude clouds were evident in Grisons and in the southern regions more than anywhere else.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, between 0 °C in the Valais and in Ticino and -2 °C in the other regions.

Wind

Winds were northeasterly, blowing at moderate to strong velocity in the Prealps and light to moderate in the other regions, slackening off during the course of the day.

Weather forecast through Saturday, 12.3.2016

In northern regions, overcast skies resembling high fog will prevail, with their upper borderline rising from 1600 to approximately 2400 m during the course of the day. Above that altitude, it will be predominantly sunny.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m in northern regions, -3 °C and in southern regions, -1 °C.

Wind

Winds will be northeasterly, blowing at light to moderate strength along the northern flank of the Alps and at high altitudes in general, in other regions blowing mostly at light strength.

Outlook through Monday, 14.3.2016

On both days in northern regions, cloud cover resembling high fog will prevail, its upper borderline between 1500 and 2000 m. Above that altitude and in the remaining regions in general, it will be sunny by and large. The avalanche danger is expected to diminish; however, only very slowly in the regions where the old snow cover is weakened.