

Heightened avalanche danger in high alpine regions

Edition: 13.10.2016, 17:00 / Next update: In the event of heavy snowfall

Avalanche danger

High alpine regions: Main Alpine Ridge and from eastern sector of the Bernese Oberland into the Glarner Alps

Both new fallen and newly drifted snow need to be evaluated with caution. Avalanche prone locations for dry-snow avalanches are to be found in north-facing, glaciated regions more than anywhere else, as well as in steep gullies where beneath the fresh fallen snow loosely-packed old snow lies deposited. Dangerously large-sized avalanches can be triggered even by one single person. Naturally-triggered avalanches can also be expected, particularly on Friday and on Saturday. As a result of solar radiation on Sunday, moist snowslides are anticipated in the customary avalanche paths which are rocky. High altitude tours make experience essential in assessing avalanche dangers on-site.

Snow and weather

Snowpack

In the high alpine regions along the Main Alpine Ridge there was between 10 and 30 cm of fresh fallen snow deposited this week. This snow remained loosely-packed as temperatures were low and the nocturnal skies clear. In those areas where it was not transported by the strong southerly winds on Thursday, the snow will now be blanketed over by fresh fallen snow and can subsequently act as a weak layer.

At lower altitudes as well as in the remaining regions of Switzerland above 1600 to 1800 m, there is only a few centimeters of snow over widespread areas.

Weather review to Thursday

On Wednesday night, southerly winds gained in force. During the day on Thursday, they were blowing at moderate to strong velocity. In western and southern regions, precipitation set in. The snowfall level ascended to 2500 m in western regions, in southern regions to approximately 1500 m. Until the afternoon there was only a small amount of precipitation.

Weather forecast through Sunday

On the Main Alpine Ridge and southwards therefrom, continuous and intensive snowfall is anticipated in some regions until Saturday afternoon. The snowfall level is expected to rapidly ascend from approximately 1800 m up to 2700 to 3000 m on Friday; on Saturday the snowfall level will be 2500 to 2700 m. On Saturday afternoon, only a small amount of additional precipitation is expected.

In the remaining regions of Switzerland, foehn-wind conditions will prevail until evening on Friday, it will remain generally dry with bright skies in some regions. On Friday night, the precipitation is expected to extend over the Main Alpine Ridge from the south. The snowfall level will be between 2500 and 2700 m. During the daytime on Saturday it will then turn increasingly sunny from the west; in eastern regions the heavily overcast skies are expected to persist.

The southerly winds will be blowing at strong to storm strength during the day on Friday and throughout Friday night; then on Saturday, the winds will slacken off significantly and, in the evening, shift to northerly.

Until the end of this round of precipitation is reached on Saturday afternoon, the following amounts of snowfall are anticipated above 3000 m:

- along the Main Alpine Ridge from Zermatt to the Simplon region and in the Bernina region: 70 to 100 cm;
- in the remaining regions along the Main Alpine Ridge and southwards therefrom: 30 to 50 cm;
- from the eastern Bernese Oberland into the Glarner Alps: 20 to 40 cm;
- elsewhere, less.

On Sunday, it will be sunny and mild for the most part, with the zero-degree level at 3400 m.

Outlook

On Monday, it will be generally sunny to start with, then during the course of the day skies will become increasingly overcast from the west and temperatures will drop. On Tuesday, skies will be heavily overcast by and large and a small amount of precipitation is anticipated, particularly in western and southern regions. The avalanche danger will decrease only incrementally.

Avalanche bulletin through Sunday, 16 October 2016

13.10.2016, 17:40

If you would like to be notified via SMS whenever an unscheduled avalanche bulletin is published, send an SMS with the message "START SLF SOMMER" to tel. no. 9234. An SMS costs 20 Rappen.

You can also be sent a notice that an avalanche bulletin has been published via RSS Feed.

