Avalanche bulletin through Sunday, 20 November 2016

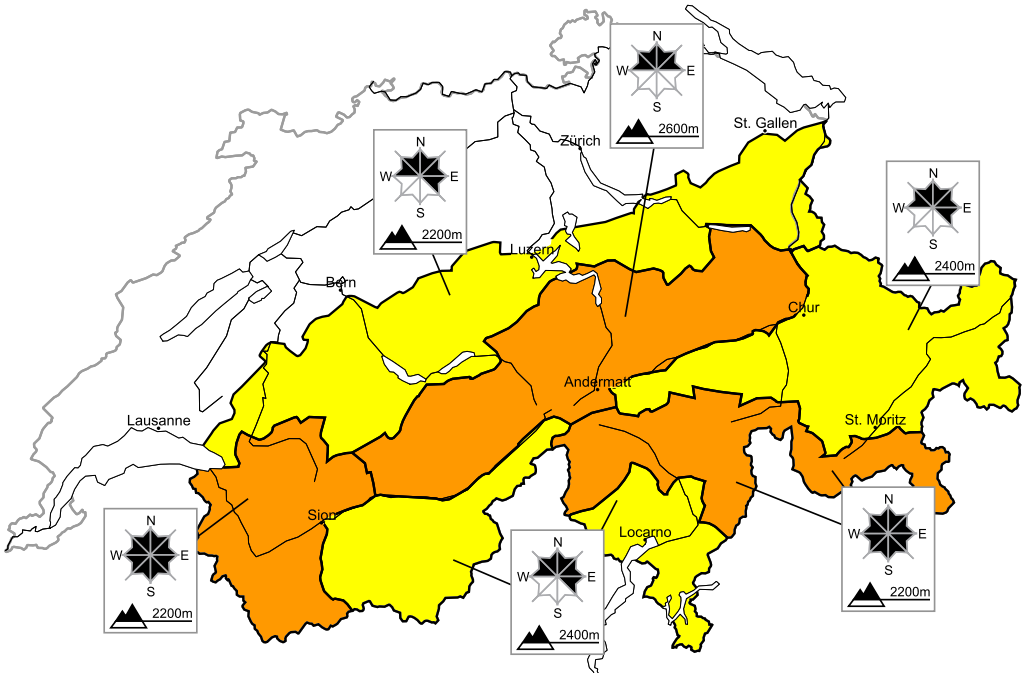
19.11.2016, 16:53

Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area

Edition: 19.11.2016, 17:00 / Next update: 20.11.2016, 17:00

Avalanche danger

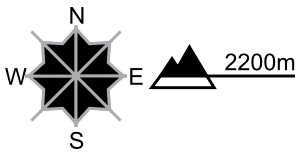
updated on 19.11.2016, 17:00



region A — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are prone to triggering. Avalanches can be released by a single winter sport participant. On shady slopes avalanches can penetrate even deep layers and reach a dangerous size. This applies above approximately 2800 m. Ski touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

Full-depth avalanches

In Valais and in the western part of the northern flank of the Alps full-depth avalanches are to be expected below approximately 2500 m. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

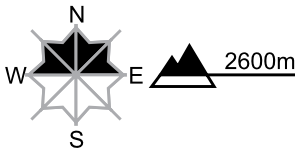
Danger levels 1 low | 2 moderate | 3 consider. | 4 high | 5 very high

WSL Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research SLF
www.slf.ch

region B — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The snow drift accumulations are prone to triggering. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches. Additionally to some extent avalanches can be triggered in deep layers, in particular on shady slopes above approximately 2800 m. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

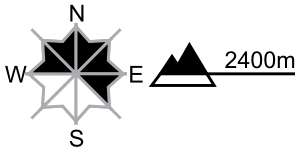
Full-depth avalanches

Northern flank of the Alps and Valais: Below approximately 2500 m full-depth avalanches are to be expected. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

region C — Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



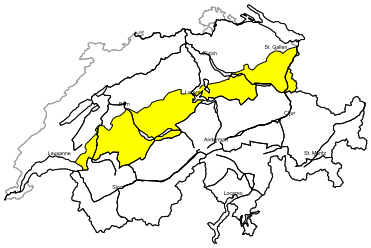
Danger description

Snow drift accumulations are mostly small. They are to be found in particular adjacent to the ridge line and in gullies and bowls. The snow drift accumulations are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain.
In isolated cases avalanches can also be triggered in deep layers. This applies in particular on shady slopes above approximately 2800 m.
Careful route selection is recommended.

Full-depth avalanches

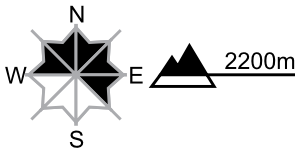
Valais: Below approximately 2500 m full-depth avalanches are to be expected. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

region D — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The snow drift accumulations are in some cases prone to triggering at elevated altitudes. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain. Careful route selection is recommended.

Full-depth avalanches

Full-depth avalanches are to be expected. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 19.11.2016, 17:00

Snowpack

Over the course of the last few days, strong-velocity southwesterly winds have transported the loosely-packed old snow on shady slopes only above approximately 2500 m, since at altitudes below the snowpack surface was moist, including on north-facing slopes. At intermediate altitudes the entire snow cover was thoroughly wet. The fresh fallen snow has also been intensively transported. At high altitudes and in high alpine regions, avalanches of the fresh fallen and freshly drifted snow can be triggered at the borderline transition point to the old snowpack surface more than anywhere else.
At the end of October in all regions of Switzerland, there was a small amount of old snow on shady slopes at high altitudes, on south-facing slopes only in high alpine regions. Above approximately 2800 m, the snow on smooth, shady slopes formed a cohesive, area-wide snowpack. The October snow was frequently faceted on the upper surface; this is currently the snowpack's most strikingly weak layer on shady slopes at high altitudes.
At 2000 m in the western sector of the northern flank of the Alps and in the Lower Valais, the snow is 60 to 80 cm deep; in northern Valais as deep as 100 cm. In other regions of Switzerland the snow is generally 20 to 40 cm deep; on the northern flank of the Alps somewhat deeper in places; in other regions the snow cover is somewhat more shallow. The least snow at this altitude is currently found in the valleys of Visp and in the Simplon region, as well as from central Grisons into the Upper Engadine: less than 20 cm.

Observed weather on Saturday, 19.11.2016

On Saturday skies were overcast. Repeated bouts of precipitation were registered.

Fresh snow

During the course of the day the snowfall level descended from west to east from approximately 1800 m down to approximately 1200 m. Above 2000 m between Friday afternoon and Saturday afternoon, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow were registered:

- northern and furthermost western parts of Lower Valais, Vaud Alps, central and eastern Prealps, northern and central Ticino, Main Alpine Ridge from the Rheinwaldhorn into the Bernina region: 20 to 40 cm;
- remaining sectors of the northern flank of the Alps, remaining parts of Lower Valais, remaining parts of central Grisons into Val Müstair: 10 to 20 cm;
- from the valleys of Visp over Goms, Urner and Glarner Alps to northern Grisons and into the Lower Engadine: generally less than 10 cm.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, between -2 °C in northern regions, 0° in southern regions and +2 °C in eastern regions.

Wind

Winds in the mountains will be westerly to southwesterly, blowing for the most part at moderate to strong velocity, intermittently reaching storm strength.

Weather forecast through Sunday, 20.11.2016

On the southern flank of the Alps, skies will be heavily overcast, accompanied by light precipitation in Ticino. In northern regions it will be rather sunny.

Fresh snow

In Ticino there will be a small amount of snowfall above 1200 m, in other regions it will remain dry.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, in northern regions +4 °C; in southern regions, -2 °C

Wind

The southwesterly winds will once again intensify Saturday night, subsequently blowing at strong to storm-strength velocity during the daytime on Sunday. In the Alpine valleys, strong to storm-strength foehn winds will prevail.

Avalanche bulletin through Sunday, 20 November 2016

Outlook through Tuesday, 22.11.2016

In southern regions on both days, skies will be overcast and above 1500 to 1800 m persistent snowfall is anticipated. The snowfall will be particularly intensive on the Main Alpine Ridge from the Monte Rosa region into the upper valleys of Maggia. The avalanche danger is expected to increase significantly in those regions.
In northern regions, skies will be variably cloudy accompanied by extended sunny spells, particularly in the foehn-influenced regions. The winds will be blowing at strong to storm strength from southerly directions, in the foehn-influenced regions extending down to low-lying areas. The avalanche danger is not expected to change significantly in northern regions.