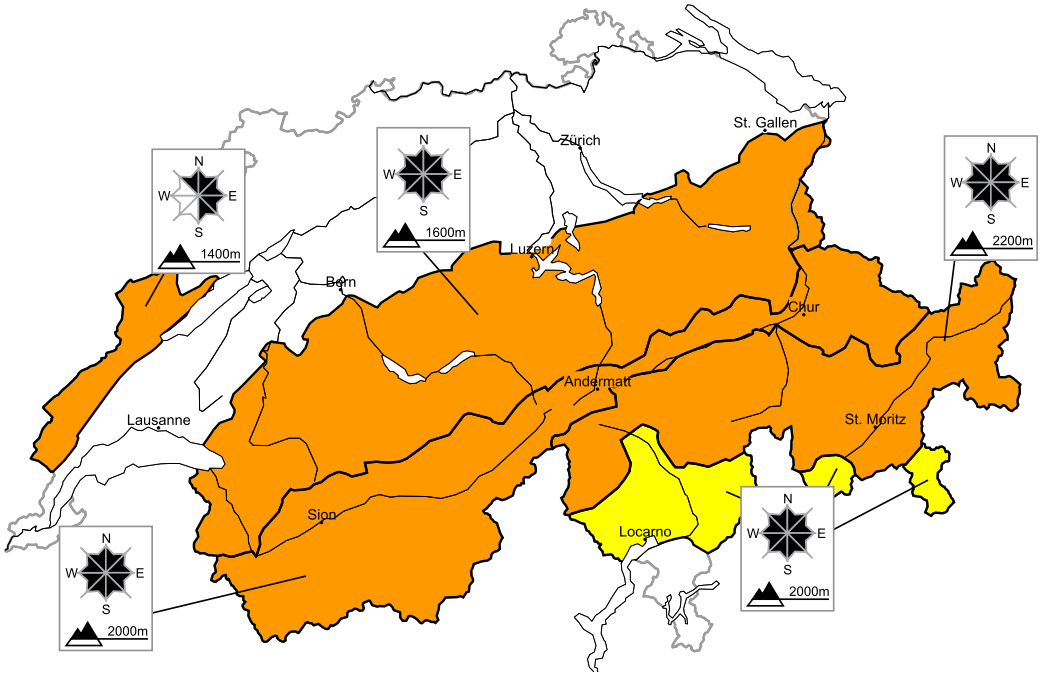
Off-piste activities call for great caution and restraint

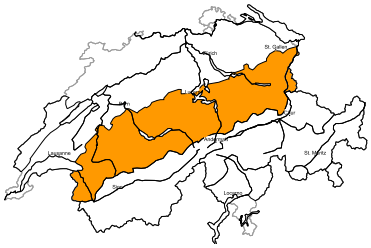
Edition: 15.1.2017, 08:00 / Next update: 15.1.2017, 17:00

Avalanche danger

updated on 15.1.2017, 08:00

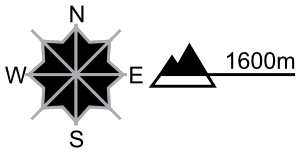


region A — Level 3, considerable



Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind extensive snow drift accumulations have formed. Additionally in some places avalanches can also be triggered in the old snowpack. This applies especially on north facing slopes above approximately 2200 m. Natural avalanches are possible, including large ones in isolated cases. Exposed parts of transportation routes are endangered in isolated cases at high altitude. Slides can occur on cut slopes, also at intermediate altitudes.

Even single snow sport participants can release avalanches, including dangerously large ones. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for great caution and restraint.

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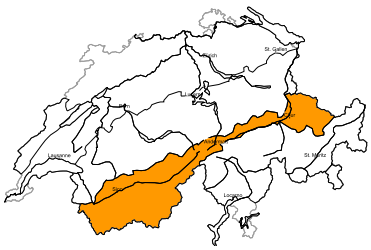
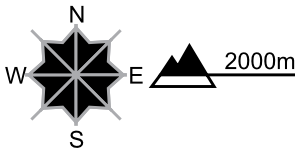
region B — Level 3, considerable



Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



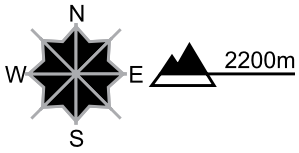
Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind easily released snow drift accumulations have formed. Additionally avalanches can be triggered in near-ground layers and reach dangerously large size. Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches easily. Remote triggering is possible. Individual natural avalanches are possible.
Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and great restraint.

region C — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



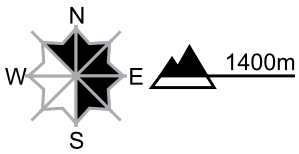
Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind easily released snow drift accumulations have formed. Additionally avalanches can be triggered in near-ground layers and reach medium size in isolated cases. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches.
Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

region D — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind snow drift accumulations have formed. They are to be avoided in steep terrain. Avalanches can be released, even by a single winter sport participant, but they will be small in most cases.
Backcountry touring and snowshoe hiking call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

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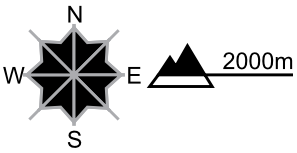
region E

Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of the strong wind snow drift accumulations will form. These are only small but can be released easily.
Additionally in some places avalanches can be released in near-ground layers, especially on shady slopes above approximately 2200 m. Avalanche prone locations are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain.
Careful route selection is recommended.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 14.1.2017, 17:00

Snowpack

As a result of fresh fallen snow and strong-velocity northwesterly winds, already on Friday and again on Saturday wide-ranging and easily-triggerable snowdrift accumulations were brought about. The fresh fallen and freshly drifted snow was deposited on top of a snowpack which for the most part was shallow. This snow cover, more than anywhere else at altitudes between 2200 and 2800 m, is in some places utterly transformed to loosely-packed, faceted snow crystals, in other places it is blanketed with melt-freeze crusts or riddled with hardened, older layers of snowdrift. Avalanches can fracture even in the deeply embedded layers nearest to the ground and then sweep along the entire snowpack. At intermediate altitudes, the old snow cover is for the most part shallow and hardened; at higher altitudes the old snow cover was already heavily wind-influenced before this round of precipitation began and is thus weakened to a lesser extent. In the Simplon region and in Ticino, the snow cover is structured more favourably.

Observed weather on Saturday, 14.1.2017

In central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri, it was quite sunny. In other regions of Switzerland skies were heavily overcast accompanied by snowfall down to low lying areas. On the northern flank of the Alps the snowfall was intermittently intensive.

Fresh snow

Between Friday afternoon and Saturday afternoon, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow were registered:

- north of an imaginary Rhine-Rhone line, as well as in the Prättigau: 30 to 60 cm; in the Glarner and Urner Alps as much as 80 cm;
- southern Lower Valais, southern Gotthard region, remaining parts of northern and central Grisons, Engadine north of the Inn: 15 to 30 cm;
- further to the south, only a few centimeters; or else, it remained dry.

Thus, overall since the beginning of this period of precipitation on Thursday evening, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow have been registered above approximately 1800 m:

- Lower Valais, regions north of an imaginary Rhine-Rhone line, Prättigau: 50 to 100 cm; in the Urner and Glarner Alps, more from place to place;
- southern part of Upper Valais not including Saas Fee and not including the southern Simplon region, southern Gotthard region, remaining parts of northern Grisons: 30 to 50 cm;
- remaining regions of Switzerland: 15 to 30 cm; in Sotto Ceneri and the southern valleys of Grisons, only a few centimeters.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, -10 °C.

Wind

Winds were blowing at moderate to strong velocity, intermittently blowing at storm strength, from the northwest.

Avalanche bulletin for Sunday, 15 January 2017

Weather forecast through Sunday, 15.1.2017

In northern regions, skies are expected to remain heavily overcast. Following a tranquil interim in the ongoing precipation during the night, light snowfall will again set in during the daytime. On the southern flank of the Alps it will be sunny by and large. In the Valais, in central Grisons and in the Engadine, intermittent bright intervals will be evident.

Fresh snow

Between Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon:

- western part of the Bernese Alps, central and eastern sectors of the northern flank of the Alps, northern Grisons: 10 to 25 cm;
- remaining parts of the western sector of the northern flank of the Alps: 5 to 10 cm;
- remaining regions of Switzerland, only a few centimeters; on the southern flank of the Alps it will remain dry.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, -13 °C in northern regions and -10 °C in southern regions.

Wind

At high altitudes in general, and in Ticino, winds will be blowing at moderate to strong velocity, shifting from northwesterly to northerly.

Outlook through Tuesday, 17.1.2017

In southern regions it will be predominantly sunny. In northern regions, skies will be predominantly overcast on Monday, and a small amount of intermittent snowfall is anticipated. On Tuesday in northeastern regions, residual cloud will still be evident and final light snow showers are anticipated. In the other regions of Switzerland it will be quite sunny. Strong bise winds are expected to arise and it will remain cold. The avalanche danger will diminish only very incrementally. As a result of the bise winds, new snowdrift accumulations are expected to come about.