Avalanche bulletin for Tuesday, 17 January 2017

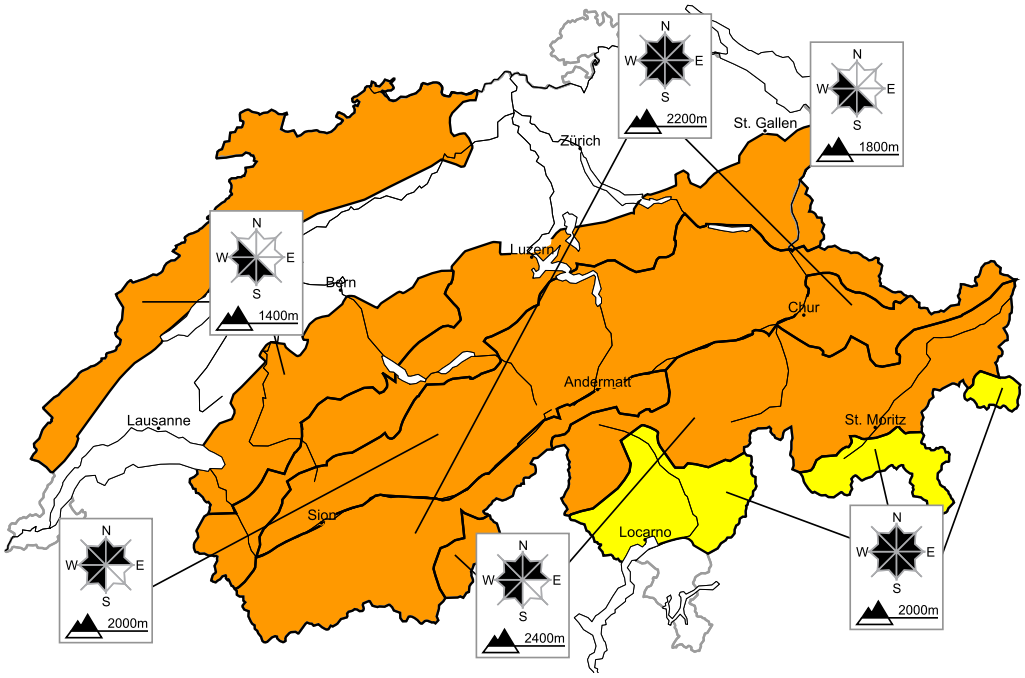
17.1.2017, 07:48

Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area

Edition: 17.1.2017, 08:00 / Next update: 17.1.2017, 17:00

Avalanche danger

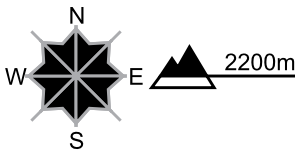
updated on 17.1.2017, 08:00



region A — Level 3, considerable

Old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations of last week are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack, especially on north facing slopes above approximately 2200 m. 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, including dangerously large ones. Remote triggering is possible. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

Snow drifts

As a consequence of the northeasterly wind avalanche prone snow drift accumulations will form, in particular at elevated altitudes. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence.

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

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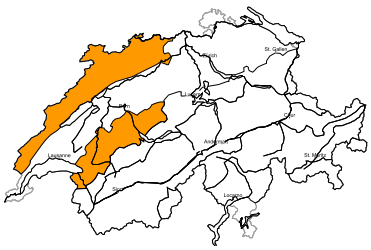
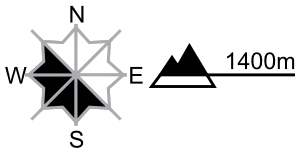
region B — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts

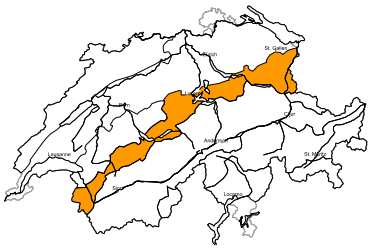
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

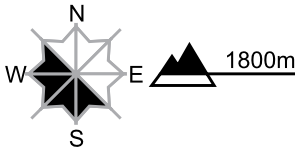
As a consequence of the Bise wind easily released snow drift accumulations will form. As the day progresses the previously small snow drift accumulations will increase in size. Even single snow sport participants can release avalanches easily. The fresh snow drift accumulations are to be avoided in steep terrain.

region C — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of the Bise wind easily released snow drift accumulations will form. As the day progresses the previously small snow drift accumulations will increase in size. Even single snow sport participants can release avalanches easily. The fresh snow drift accumulations are to be avoided in steep terrain.

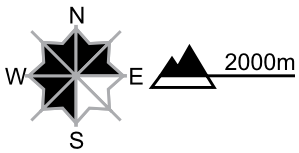
Old snow

Avalanches can be released in the weakly bonded old snow, mostly by large additional loads in isolated cases. This applies especially on north facing slopes above approximately 2200 m. Medium-sized avalanches are possible. Careful route selection and spacing between individuals are recommended.

region D — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

At elevated altitudes easily released snow drift accumulations will form. Even single snow sport participants can release avalanches easily. The fresh snow drift accumulations are to be avoided in steep terrain.
Avalanches can additionally be released in the weakly bonded old snow, mostly by large additional loads. This applies especially on north facing slopes above approximately 2200 m. Medium-sized avalanches are possible. Careful route selection and spacing between individuals are recommended.

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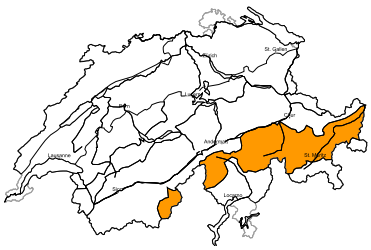
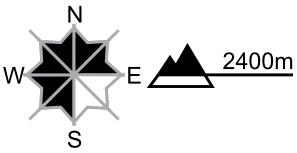
region E — Level 3, considerable



Old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations of last week are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack, especially on north facing slopes above approximately 2200 m. 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. Mostly these are small. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and careful route selection.

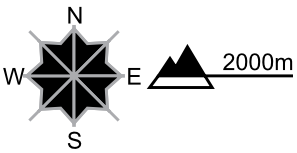
Snow drifts

As a consequence of the northeasterly wind avalanche prone snow drift accumulations have formed, in particular at elevated altitudes. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence.

region F — Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Fresh and somewhat older snow drift accumulations are prone to triggering. They are only small.
Additionally in some places avalanches can be released in near-ground layers, especially on north facing 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.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 16.1.2017, 17:00

Snowpack

Last week's fresh snow and wind slab layers are already fairly well bonded. In places where they are very deep - in particular north of a line between the Rhone and Rhine - these layers can now be released as avalanches only by large additional loads in most cases. South of a line between the Rhone and Rhine the weak layer of old snow is closer to the surface and avalanches can be released more easily. This applies in particular on shady slopes between 2200 and 2800 m, where the old snowpack is sometimes completely faceted and weak.
In the Simplon region and Ticino the old snowpack has bonded more effectively.
In particular in the north a lot of loosely bonded snow is lying on the surface of the snowpack and prone to being transported by the bise wind.

Observed weather on Monday, 16.1.2017

The northeast was very cloudy and some snow fell at times. There were bright spells in the western part of the northern flank of the Alps and in northern and central Grisons. In Valais and Engadine, and on the southern flank of the Alps, it was sunny.

Fresh snow

The following amounts of snow fell in the period from Sunday afternoon until Monday afternoon:
- Western Bernese Alps, central and eastern parts of the northern flank of the Alps: 5 to 15 cm, but more in some localities
- Rest of the northern flank of the Alps, northern Grisons: a few centimetres, but remaining mostly dry further south

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m: about -15 °C in the north and -12 °C in the south

Wind

Light to moderate, veering from northerly to northeasterly

Weather forecast through Tuesday, 17.1.2017

In the northeast low stratus-like cloud cover will prevail. On the northern flank of the Alps some snow will fall at times. Above approximately 2000 m, and in Valais and on the southern flank of the Alps, it will be mostly sunny. The danger of frostbite warrants caution in view of the low temperatures and wind.

Fresh snow

By Tuesday evening 5 to 10 cm of snow will fall in the central and eastern parts of the northern flank of the Alps, and a few centimetres will fall in the western part of the northern flank of the Alps and in northern and central Grisons.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m: about -14 °C

Wind

- Jura and Prealps: moderate bise wind, but strong in the west
- Rest of the northern flank of the Alps: at elevated altitudes strong to storm force northeasterly wind
- Valais and Grisons: at elevated altitudes moderate to strong northeasterly wind
- Ticino: moderate to strong northerly wind, easing as the day progresses

Outlook through Thursday, 19.1.2017

Apart from low stratus cloud cover, in the north the weather will be mostly sunny. The bise and northeasterly winds at elevated altitudes will slowly ease. It will be less cold. The avalanche danger will decrease slowly. In southern Valais and Grisons the situation will remain precarious in view of the weak old snowpack.