Avalanche bulletin for Wednesday, 1 March 2017

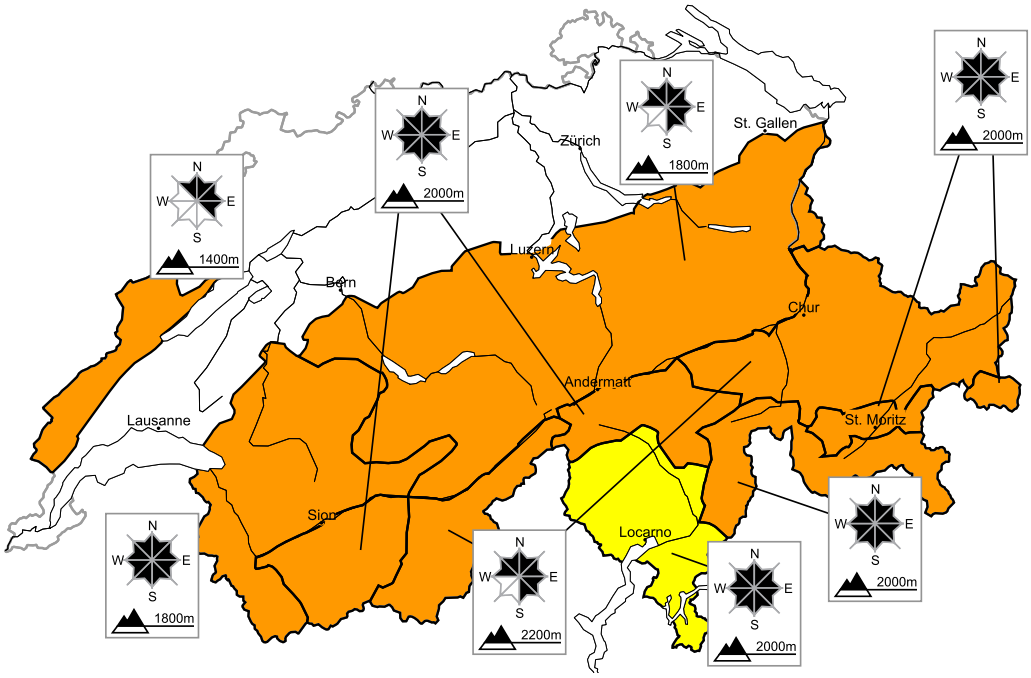
1.3.2017, 07:56

For those venturing off piste a very precarious avalanche situation will be encountered in some regions

Edition: 1.3.2017, 08:00 / Next update: 1.3.2017, 17:00

Avalanche danger

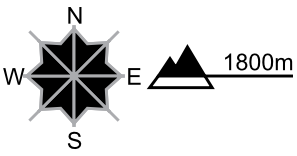
updated on 1.3.2017, 08:00



region A — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



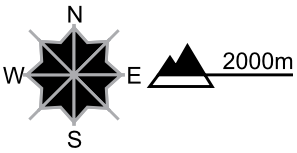
Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and stormy weather extensive snow drift accumulations have formed, also at a distance from the ridge line. The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are prone to triggering. Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches, including dangerously large ones. In particular on north and east facing slopes more natural avalanches are to be expected. The conditions are critical for ski touring, freeriding and snowshoe hiking.

region B — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack. Individual natural avalanches are possible. Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches. Especially on shady slopes avalanches can be released in deep layers of the snowpack and reach a dangerous size. Remote triggering is possible. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger.
The conditions are very precarious for ski touring, freeriding and snowshoe hiking.

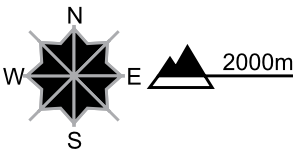
Wet avalanches as day progresses

As a consequence of solar radiation moist snow slides and avalanches are to be expected.

region C — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Snow drift accumulations are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack. They are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain, also at a distance from the ridge line. The fresh snow drift accumulations can be released by a single winter sport participant. Especially on shady slopes avalanches can penetrate even deep layers and reach a dangerous size. This applies in particular in little used backcountry terrain above approximately 2200 m. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger.

Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

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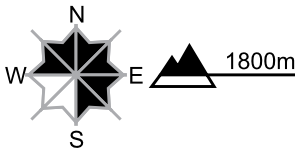
region D — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

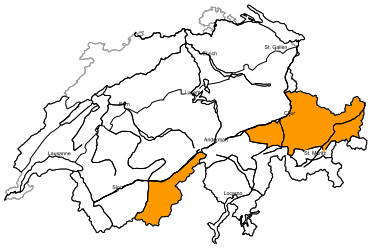
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

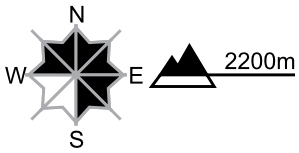
As a consequence of fresh snow and stormy weather snow drift accumulations have formed. They are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain, also at a distance from the ridge line. The fresh snow drift accumulations can be released by a single winter sport participant. They are to be avoided in steep terrain. Ski touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

region E — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



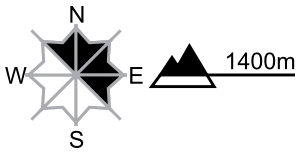
Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and stormy weather further snow drift accumulations have formed. They are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Snow drift accumulations can be released by a single winter sport participant. Especially on shady slopes avalanches can penetrate even deep layers and reach a dangerous size. This applies in particular in little used backcountry terrain above approximately 2200 m. These avalanche prone locations are rather rare but barely recognisable, even to the trained eye.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for defensive route selection. Maintaining distances between individuals and one-at-a-time descents are recommended.

region F — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and stormy weather snow drift accumulations have formed. These are to be found in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Single snow sport participants can release avalanches. Mostly these are small. The fresh snow drift accumulations are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain.

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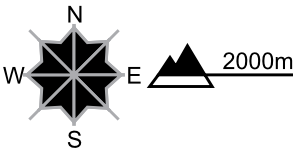
region G

Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The strong wind has transported the fresh snow. In all aspects avalanche prone snow drift accumulations have formed, also at a distance from the ridge line. The fresh snow drift accumulations can be released by a single winter sport participant, but they will be small in most cases. They are to be bypassed in steep terrain.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

As a consequence of solar radiation moist snow slides are to be expected.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 28.2.2017, 17:00

Snowpack

Strong to storm force winds and snowfall gave rise to snow drift accumulations on Tuesday even in areas that are some distance from ridgelines. In the western and southeastern regions exposed to heavier precipitation, these are already large. As a consequence of snowfall, a westerly wind in the north and a foehn wind in the south, the size of the snowdrift accumulations will continue to increase in all regions during Tuesday night.
In particular in the inneralpine regions of both Valais and Grisons the fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are lying on a thin old snowpack in which distinct weak layers exist, especially on shady slopes between 2200 and 2800 m. In these regions fractures are to be expected in the old snowpack, which can give rise to dangerously large avalanches.

Observed weather on Tuesday, 28.2.2017

With strong to storm force winds, the weather was very cloudy. From the early morning precipitation fell over a wide area. In the far west and the south it was heavy at times. The snowfall level was mostly around 1000 m, but also much higher for brief periods.

Fresh snow
In the period until Tuesday evening the following amounts of snow fell above approximately 1600 m:
- Northern Alpine ridge from Chablais to Lötschental, Vaud and Fribourg Alps, main Alpine ridge from the San Bernardino Pass to the Bernina region: 20 to 30 cm
- Remaining areas in each of the regions Bernese Alps, Lower Valais, southern flank of the Alps, and Upper Engadine: 10 to 20 cm
- Less elsewhere

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m: about -3 °C over a wide area, and about -1 °C in Grisons

Wind
- In the Alps, a strong to storm force wind from the south to west
- In the northern valleys during the night and in the afternoon, a strong southerly foehn wind
- In the Jura, a storm force wind veering from westerly to southerly

Weather forecast through Wednesday, 1.3.2017

It will be mostly very cloudy with a strong westerly wind, and snow will fall down to low altitudes until the morning. In Grisons there will be prolonged bright spells in the afternoon. In the south it will be dry and mostly sunny with a northerly wind.

Fresh snow
In the period from Tuesday afternoon until Wednesday afternoon the following amounts of snow will fall above approximately 1500 m:
- Regions north of a line between the Rhone and Rhine, Valais: 10 to 20 cm over a wide area, and up to 30 cm in some localities in the extreme west of Lower Valais in particular
- Rest of Grisons: 5 to 10 cm
- Dry in the south

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m: about -5 °C in the west and south, and about -7 °C in the east

Wind
- Strong, sometimes storm force in the high Alpine regions, from the west
- In the south during the night, strong for a while, then during the day a moderate northerly foehn wind

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Outlook through Friday, 3.3.2017

Thursday

In the north and Valais precipitation will persist until the morning. The snowfall level will rise to approximately 1400 m. During the day it will become quite sunny. During the night the wind will be strong to storm force at first and then gradually ease. The south will be partly cloudy at first, but dry. As the day progresses a northerly foehn wind will pick up and the weather will become sunny. In the north and west the avalanche danger will increase a little during the night. It will decrease in the south.

Friday

The north will be quite sunny with a foehn wind despite some fairly dense high-altitude cloudbanks. It will become mild. The foehn wind will transport the loosely bonded old snow, so that the avalanche situation will remain precarious over a wide area for winter sport participants. In the south and along the main Alpine ridge in Valais the weather will be mostly cloudy, but is likely to remain largely dry. The avalanche danger will decrease.