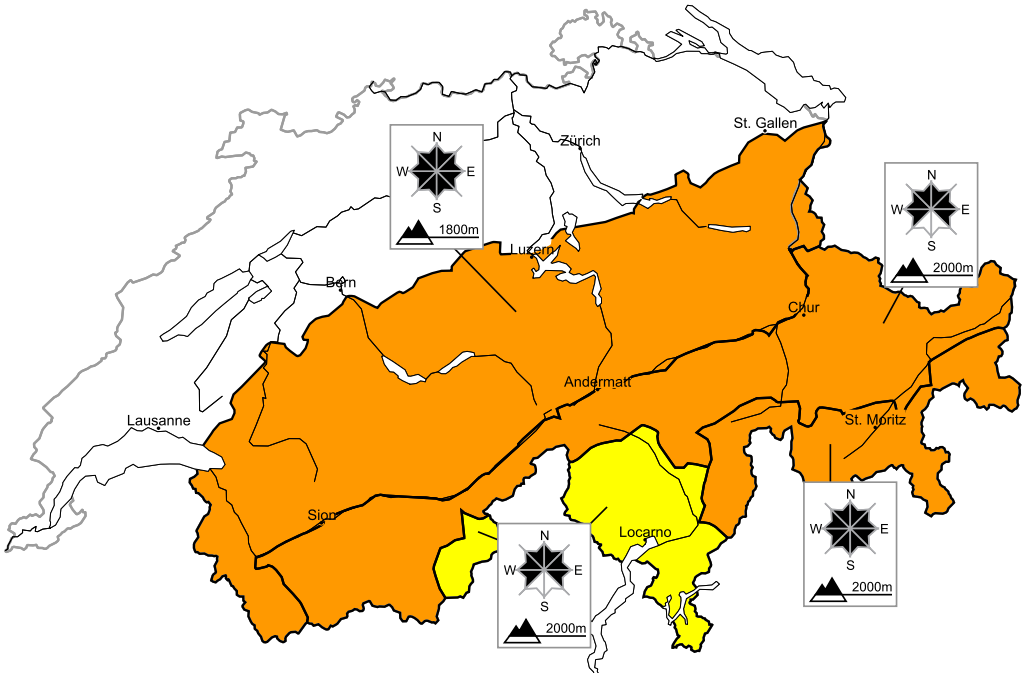
Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area

Edition: 3.3.2017, 08:00 / Next update: 3.3.2017, 17:00

Avalanche danger

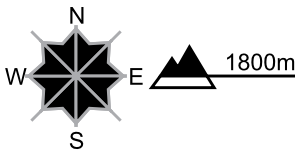
updated on 3.3.2017, 08:00



region A | **Level 3, considerable**

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations of the last few days are in some cases still prone to triggering. In addition, easily released snow drift accumulations will form. As a consequence of the strong to storm force foehn wind the avalanche prone locations increase as the day progresses. Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches, including dangerously large ones. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger. The fresh snow drift accumulations are to be avoided as far as possible.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

Below approximately 2400 m natural moist avalanches are possible, including medium-sized ones. This applies in particular on steep sunny slopes.

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

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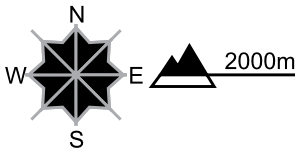
region B — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

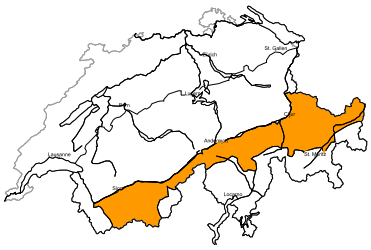
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

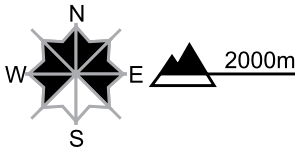
The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations of the last few days are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack. As a consequence of the southerly wind further snow drift accumulations will form. Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches. Especially on shady slopes avalanches can be released in deep layers of the snowpack and reach a dangerous size. 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. The fresh snow drift accumulations are to be avoided as far as possible.

region C — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Somewhat older snow drift accumulations are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. They are sometimes covered with fresh snow and therefore difficult to recognise. As a consequence of the southerly wind further snow drift accumulations will form. Avalanches can be released by a single winter sport participant. In particular on shady slopes they 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. The fresh snow drift accumulations are to be avoided as far as possible.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

Below approximately 2400 m natural moist avalanches are possible, but they will be mostly small. This applies in particular on steep sunny slopes.

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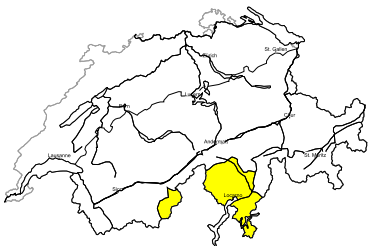
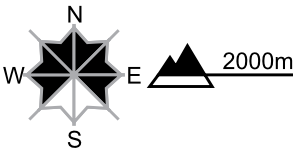
region D

Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Snow drift accumulations are to be found in particular adjacent to the ridge line and in gullies and bowls, also at a distance from the ridge line. They can especially at their margins be released, but they will be small in most cases. The snow drift accumulations are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain. Apart from the danger of being buried, restraint should be exercised also in view of the danger of avalanches sweeping people along and giving rise to falls.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 2.3.2017, 17:00

Snowpack

As a result of the southerly foehn winds which have arisen, snowdrift accumulations have been formed which are prone to triggering in western and northern regions more than anywhere else. The fresh fallen and freshly drifted snow of the last few days is settling and consolidating apace. However, in some places it is still prone to triggering, most of all at high altitudes. Below approximately 2000m, the new fallen snow is moist. Moist snowslides and moist-snow avalanches have already triggered naturally.
The more recent layers of snow from this week, more than anywhere else in the inneralpine regions of the Valais and Grisons, were deposited on top of a thin old snow cover surface which particularly on shady slopes at altitudes between 2200 and 2800 m contains deeply embedded inside it strikingly weak layers. In these regions, avalanches can in some places fracture down to those weakened layers, sweep away the entire snowpack and thereby grow to dangerously large size.

Observed weather on Thursday, 2.3.2017

Skies in western and northern regions were heavily overcast during the nocturnal hours. Above approximately 2000 m there was an additional 30 cm of fresh fallen snow registered, in western regions as much as 50 cm of new fallen snow. The snowfall level ascended to approximately 2000 m. During the course of the day, the snowfall slackened off and the skies brightened from the west and the south. In southern regions it was predominantly sunny.

Fresh snow

Between the beginning of the most recent period of precipitation on Tuesday morning until Thursday midday, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow were registered above approximately 2000 m:

- western sector of the northern flank of the Alps, Lower Valais, northern Valais, Main Alpine Ridge from San Bernardino into the Bernina region: 40 to 80 cm; in the northern and furthermost western parts of Lower Valais as much as 120 cm;
- central and eastern sectors of the northern flank of the Alps, northwestern Ticino, Arosa, Davos, remaining parts of Upper Engadine: 30 to 40 cm;
- in the other regions of Switzerland: 10 to 30 cm.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, -3 °C in northern regions and 0 °C in southern regions.

Wind

Winds in northern regions were southwesterly, blowing at strong velocity during the night; in other regions winds were southwesterly, then shifted to northwesterly, and were blowing for the most part at light to moderate strength.

Weather forecast through Friday, 3.3.2017

Skies will be predominantly clear during the night. During the daytime in northern regions there will be intermittently dense cloudbanks, but frequently it will be sunny. In southern regions skies will increasingly become heavily overcast starting already in the early morning hours. However, it is expected to remain dry until afternoon, by and large.

Fresh snow

-

Temperature

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

Wind

- Winds in northern regions will be blowing at moderate to strong velocity at high altitudes, in southern regions at moderate strength, from the southwest.
- In the typical foehn-influenced valleys of the north, strong to storm-strength foehn winds will arise.

Avalanche bulletin for Friday, 3 March 2017

Outlook through Sunday, 5.3.2017

In northern regions it will be sunny to start with on Saturday, accompanied by storm-strength foehn winds, before the foehn slackens off during the afternoon and clouds move in from the west. On Sunday, skies will be variably cloudy, accompanied by snow showers above approximately 1000 m, alternating with sunny intervals. On the Main Alpine Ridge and southwards therefrom, skies will for the most part be heavily overcast on Saturday and from region to region above approximately 1000 m, heavy snowfall is anticipated. On Sunday, the snowfall is expected to slacken off and the skies will then brighten incrementally.
The avalanche danger could well increase somewhat in northern regions on Saturday as a result of freshly formed snowdrift accumulations. In southern regions avalanche danger is expected to increase noticeably on Saturday as a result of the new fallen snow and storm-strength southerly winds. On Sunday, this heightened danger level is not expected to change significantly.