Avalanche bulletin for Wednesday, 8 March 2017

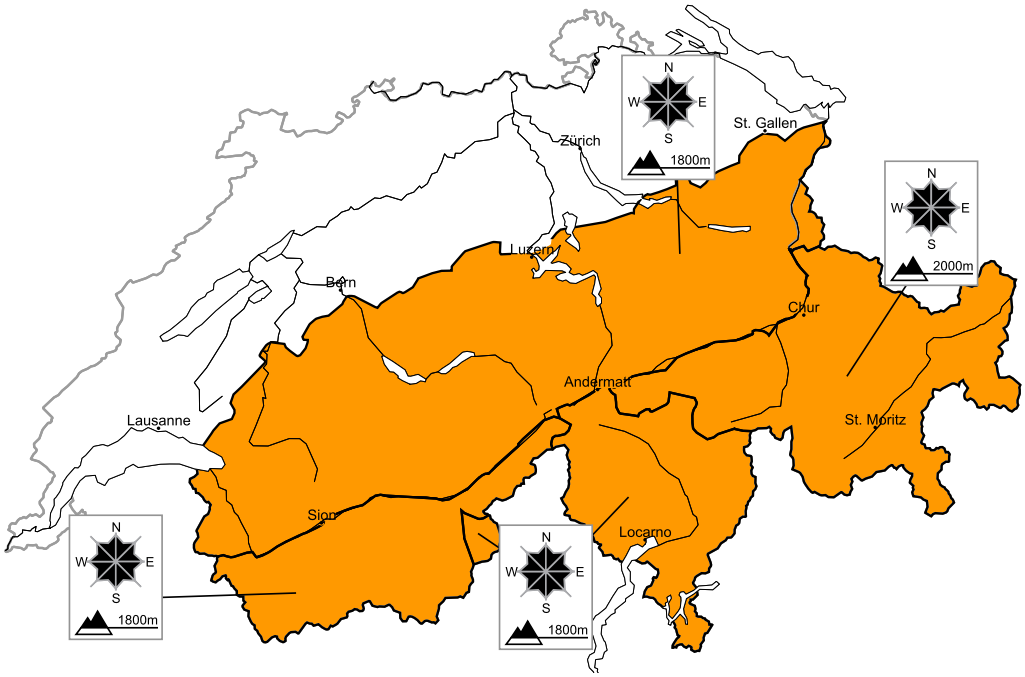
8.3.2017, 07:50

Considerable avalanche danger will prevail. Snow drifts and weakly bonded old snow require caution

Edition: 8.3.2017, 08:00 / Next update: 8.3.2017, 17:00

Avalanche danger

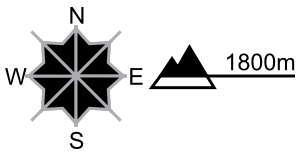
updated on 8.3.2017, 08:00



region A | **Level 3, considerable**

Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and wind extensive snow drift accumulations have formed. These remain prone to triggering. Even single snow sport participants can release avalanches, including medium-sized ones. Individual natural avalanches are possible. In particular on shady slopes avalanches can penetrate even deep layers. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger.
The conditions are critical for backcountry touring and other off-piste activities. The current avalanche situation calls for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and great restraint.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

At intermediate altitudes small and, in isolated cases, medium-sized moist avalanches are to be expected as a consequence of warming.

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

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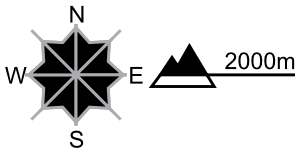
region B — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

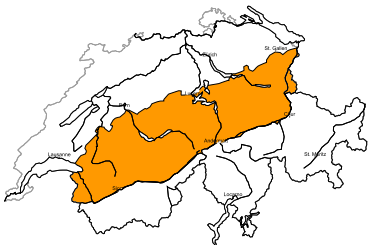
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

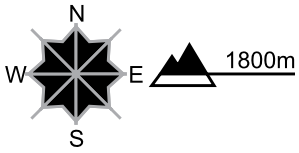
In particular adjacent to the ridge line and in gullies and bowls further snow drift accumulations have formed. The fresh and somewhat older snow drift accumulations remain prone to triggering. Even single snow sport participants can release avalanches. Natural avalanches are possible in isolated cases. In particular on shady slopes avalanches can penetrate even deep layers and reach a dangerous size. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger.
The conditions are critical for backcountry touring and other off-piste activities. The current avalanche situation calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

region C — Level 3, considerable



Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind extensive snow drift accumulations have formed. They are prone to triggering. Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches, including medium-sized ones. Hardly any more natural avalanches are to be expected as the snowfall eases. The off-piste conditions are precarious. The current avalanche situation calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

At intermediate altitudes small and, in isolated cases, medium-sized moist avalanches are to be expected as a consequence of warming. Individual full-depth avalanches are possible.

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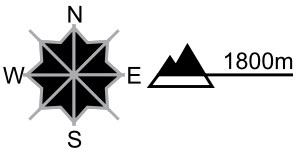
region D

Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of the sometimes storm force wind avalanche prone snow drift accumulations have formed. They are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches. Ski touring and other off-piste activities, including snowshoe hiking, call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and careful route selection. The more recent snow drift accumulations are to be bypassed.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

At intermediate altitudes mostly small moist snow slides are to be expected as a consequence of warming.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 7.3.2017, 17:00

Snowpack

In the west and north a lot of snow has fallen in the last two days. Both this fresh snow and the mostly loosely bonded old snow have been transported in large quantities and formed large snow drift accumulations over a wide area. On Monday night in particular the number of natural avalanches increased. Some of them were large. In isolated cases they are likely to have released the more compacted wind slab layers that formed during the foehn period at the end of last week as well. Looking back on Monday night, the avalanche danger "high" (level 4) would have been justified for the northern Alpine ridge from the Trient region to the Glarus Alps.
In the inneralpine regions of both Valais and Grisons the fresh and wind slab layers of recent days 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, avalanches can penetrate the weak old snowpack and reach a dangerously large size. The daily release of avalanches by persons in these regions bears witness to the persistence of a critical situation.

Observed weather on Tuesday, 7.3.2017

The precipitation in the west and north was heavy during the night. The snowfall level dropped quickly to low altitudes. During the day there were snow showers in the west and north. In the south, the mostly sunny weather was accompanied by a strong northerly wind. There were brief bright spells in the inneralpine regions.

Fresh snow

The following amounts of snow fell in the period from Monday afternoon until Tuesday afternoon:
- From the Trient region via Les Diablerets to Lötschental, from Hasliberg via the Titlis to the Uri Rotstock, and in the southern part of the Glarus Alps: 50 to 70 cm
- Rest of Lower Valais and the remaining regions north of a line between the Rhone and Rhine: 30 to 50 cm
- Southern Lower Valais, southern Gotthard region, northern Grisons: 20 to 30 cm
- Rest of northern Ticino, central Grisons, Engadine: 10 to 20 cm, smaller amounts further south

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m: between -7 °C in the north and -5 °C in the south

Wind

- At elevated altitudes during the night, strong to storm force; during the day, moderate to strong; from the northwest
- On the southern flank of the Alps, moderate to strong northerly foehn wind even in the lowlands

Weather forecast through Wednesday, 8.3.2017

During the night the snowfall will cease in the northeast as well, and the skies will clear. In the morning cloud will quickly build up again from the west, and in the afternoon precipitation will resume. The snowfall level will rise to above 1500 m. The south will be mostly sunny in the morning, but become increasingly cloudy in the afternoon

Fresh snow

In the period until Wednesday evening 5 to 15 cm of snow will fall above approximately 1800 m on the northern Alpine ridge from the eastern Bernese Oberland to the Alpstein massif, and in northern Grisons.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m: between -1 °C in the west and south, and -4 °C in the east

Wind

- During the night and in the morning, light to moderate; in the afternoon, strong northwesterly at elevated altitudes
- On the southern flank of the Alps, an easing northerly foehn wind, but at elevated altitudes a strong northwesterly wind throughout the day

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Outlook through Friday, 10.3.2017

Thursday

In the north snow will fall above 1500 bis 2000 m; the snowfall will be heavy in the northeast. The wind will be moderate to strong from the west to northwest, in particular in the eastern regions. The avalanche danger will increase in the northeast as a consequence of the precipitation and wind. In the west and south it will decrease slowly.

Friday

Once the residual cloud in the northeast had dispersed, it will be mostly sunny and mild. At elevated altitudes the wind will be strong from the north. In Ticino there will be a northerly foehn wind even in the lowlands. Although the avalanche danger will slowly decrease, at intermediate altitudes wet snow slides are to be expected, and at elevated altitudes the avalanche situation will remain precarious for winter sport participants as a consequence of fresh snow drift accumulations.