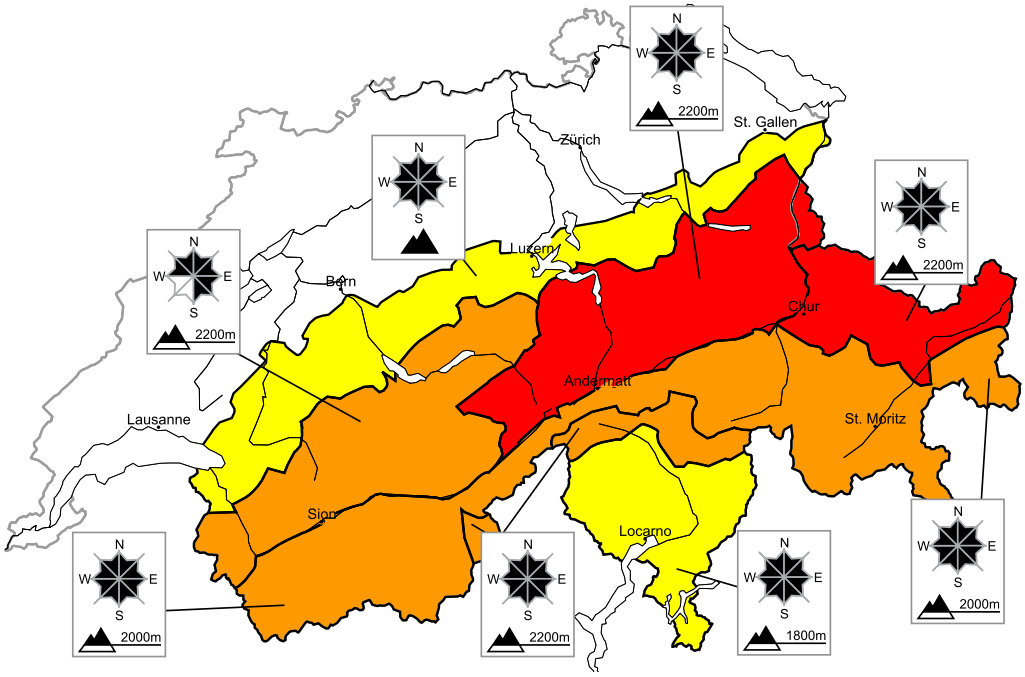
A critical avalanche situation will prevail. High avalanche danger will persist in some regions

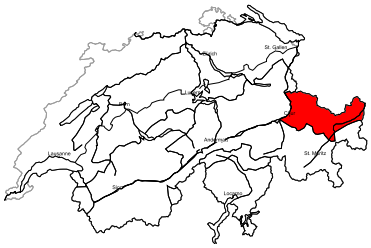
Edition: 10.3.2017, 08:00 / Next update: 10.3.2017, 17:00

Avalanche danger

updated on 10.3.2017, 08:00

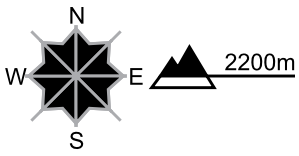


region A — Level 4, high



Old snow, fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind further snow drift accumulations have formed. Over a wide area fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are lying on a weakly bonded old snowpack. Individual natural avalanches are possible, including large ones. From high-altitude starting zones the avalanches can in some cases reach the valleys. Exposed transportation routes can be endangered. With the end of the precipitation, the natural avalanche activity will gradually decrease. The conditions are very critical for backcountry touring and other off-piste activities outside marked and open pistes.

Wet and full-depth avalanches

Below approximately 2200 m more small and medium-sized full-depth and wet avalanches are possible. Slides can occur on cut slopes.

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

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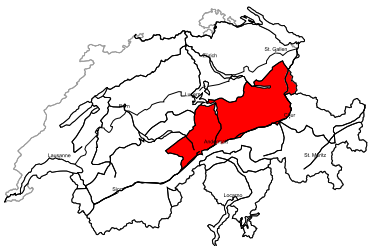
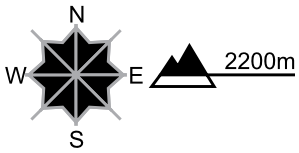
region B — Level 4, high



Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind further snow drift accumulations have formed. These are in some cases prone to triggering. Avalanches can in isolated cases penetrate deep layers and reach large size. Individual natural avalanches are possible. From high-altitude starting zones the avalanches can in some cases reach the valleys. Exposed transportation routes can be endangered. With the end of the precipitation, the natural avalanche activity will appreciably decrease. The conditions are very critical for backcountry touring and other off-piste activities outside marked and open pistes.

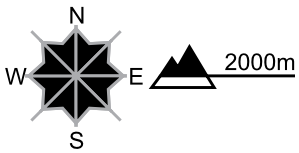
Wet and full-depth avalanches

Below approximately 2200 m more small and medium-sized full-depth and wet avalanches are possible. Slides can occur on cut slopes.

region C — Level 3, considerable

Old snow, fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Over a wide area fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are lying on a weakly bonded old snowpack. Avalanches can be released by a single winter sport participant. More natural avalanches are possible. Avalanches can penetrate deep layers and reach dangerously large size. Exposed parts of transportation routes can be endangered. 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 great caution and restraint.

Wet and full-depth avalanches

At intermediate altitudes more full-depth and wet avalanches are possible.

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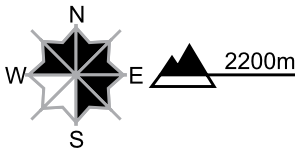
region D — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow drift accumulations are prone to triggering. Older snow drift accumulations can be released in isolated cases especially at their margins. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches. As the temperature drops hardly any more natural dry avalanches are to be expected. The current avalanche situation calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

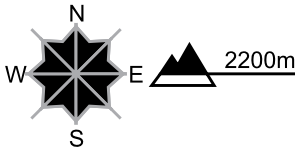
Wet and full-depth avalanches

Below approximately 2200 m more small and medium-sized full-depth and wet avalanches are possible.

region E — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



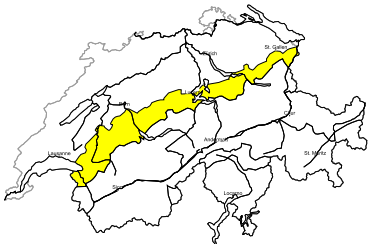
Danger description

The fresh and older snow drift accumulations are in some cases prone to triggering. 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

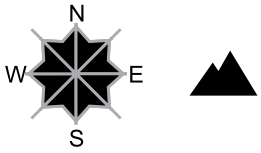
At intermediate altitudes mostly small moist snow slides are possible.

region F — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts, wet and full-depth avalanches

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The snowpack is wet all the way through below approximately 2000 m. Small and, in isolated cases, medium-sized full-depth and wet avalanches are possible. Above approximately 2000 m sometimes avalanche prone snow drift accumulations have formed. These are to be assessed with care and prudence. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for careful route selection.

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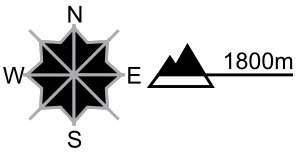
region G

Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The somewhat older snow drift accumulations can be released by large loads at their margins in particular. The fresh snow drift accumulations are mostly small but prone to triggering. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for careful route selection. Snow drift accumulations are to be assessed with care and prudence.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

At intermediate altitudes mostly small moist snow slides are possible.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 9.3.2017, 17:00

Snowpack

As a result of snowfall and strong-velocity northwesterly winds, additional, wide-ranging snowdrift accumlations have been created and deposited at high altitudes in the major regions of precipitation on the northern flank of the Alps and in northern Grisons more than anywhere else. Subsequently, as a result of the heightened temperatures and the consequent rainfall, the snowpack became moist (at intermediate altitudes thoroughly wet) up to altitudes approaching 2500m, even significantly higher in the Valais. This conjuncture of circumstances led to numerous avalanches triggering naturally.
More deeply embedded inside the snowpack, on shady slopes between 2200 and 2800 m more than anywhere else, there are weakened layers evident consisting of faceted-crystal snow. In the inneralpine regions of the Valais and Grisons, the avalanches which are triggered frequently fracture down to these weakened layers inside the old snowpack and subsequently grow to dangerously large size. North of an imaginary Rhine-Rhone line, such fractures in the old snowpack occur more rarely but they are nonetheless possible in isolated cases as a result of the massive weight of the fresh fallen and freshly drifted snow of the last few days which greatly burdens the snowpack.

Observed weather on Thursday, 9.3.2017

In the central sector of the southern flank of the Alps it was predominantly sunny. In other regions of Switzerland skies were overcast and there was snowfall above 1500 to 2000 m, which in the northeastern regions was heavy.

Fresh snow

Between Wednesday afternoon and Thursday afternoon, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow were registered above approximately 2000m:

- northern Alpine Ridge from the Loetschental into Liechtenstein, Schwyzer Prealps and northern Glarner Alps, northern Grisons, Lower Engadine north of the Inn: 30 to 50 cm;
- remaining sectors of the northern flank of the Alps not including Chablais, remaining parts of the Upper Valais, southern Gotthard region, central Grisons, Upper Engadine north of the Inn, Lower Engadine south of the Inn, Val Müstair: 15 to 30 cm;
- remaining regions of Switzerland, less; in southern regions it remained dry.

Temperature

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

Wind

- Winds at high altitudes were northwesterly, blowing at moderate to strong velocity.
- Winds in the Prealps were southwesterly, blowing at moderate to strong velocity.

Weather forecast through Friday, 10.3.2017

In eastern regions skies will still be overcast during the morning and the final round of snowfall is expected. Subsequently skies are expected to clear. In western and southern regions it will be predominantly sunny.

Fresh snow

Between Thursday afternoon and Friday afternoon, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow are anticipated above approximately 2000 m:

- eastern part of Bernese Oberland, central sector of the northern flank of the Alps not including Gotthard region, eastern sector of the northern flank of the Alps, furthermost northern regions of Grisons: 20 to 35 cm;
- bordering regions: 10 to 20 cm; in other regions of Switzerland, less; in the central sector of the southern flank of the Alps it will remain dry.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, between 0 °C in western and southern regions and -4 °C in eastern regions.

Wind

- Winds at high altitude will be northerly, blowing at moderate to strong velocity in the western regions, at strong to storm strength in the eastern regions.
- On the southern flank of the Alps, northerly foehn wind will prevail and be blowing at moderate to strong velocity down as far as the valley floor.

Avalanche bulletin for Friday, 10 March 2017

Outlook through Sunday, 12.3.2017

On Saturday it will be predominantly sunny in spite of some cloudbanks. On Sunday it will be only partly sunny and during the course of the day a small amount of precipitation is anticipated. Winds are expected to slacken off significantly. On Saturday it will be mild, on Sunday temperatures will drop somewhat. The avalanche danger will diminish, but in the southern Valais and the inneralpine regions of Grisons only very gradually as a result of the poor structuring of the snowpack.