Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered in some regions

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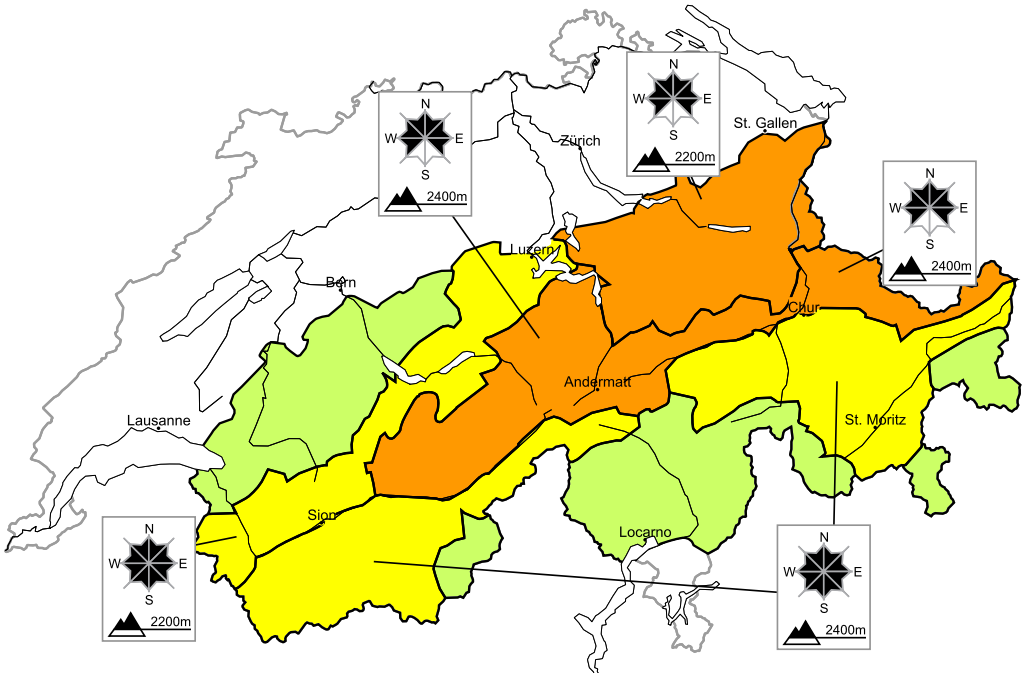
Avalanche danger

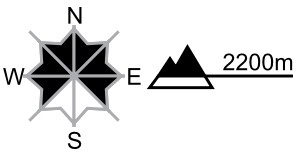
updated on 20.4.2017, 17:00



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 prone to triggering. Single snow sport participants can release avalanches, including dangerously large ones. Avalanche prone locations are to be found also adjacent to the ridge line in all aspects. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Wet avalanches as day progresses, Full-depth avalanches

As a consequence of warming during the day and solar radiation moist snow slides and avalanches are to be expected. This applies in particular on steep east, south and west facing slopes below approximately 2800 m. In particular on steep grassy slopes full-depth avalanches are possible.

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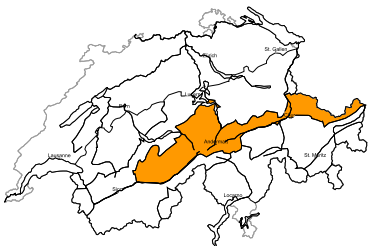
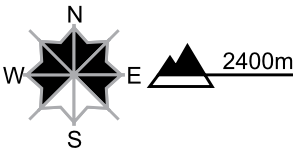
region B — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



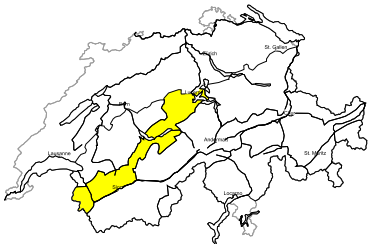
Danger description

The snow drift accumulations of the last few days can be released by a single winter sport participant. The snow drift accumulations are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Avalanche prone locations are to be found also adjacent to the ridge line in all aspects. Backcountry touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Wet avalanches as day progresses, Full-depth avalanches

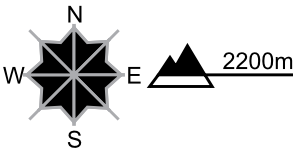
As a consequence of warming during the day and solar radiation moist snow slides and avalanches are to be expected. This applies in particular on steep east, south and west facing slopes below approximately 2800 m. In particular on steep grassy slopes full-depth avalanches are possible.

region C — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The snow drift accumulations of the last few days represent the main danger. These are mostly only small but can in some cases be released easily. They are to be found in particular adjacent to the ridge line and in gullies and bowls. The number and size of avalanche prone locations will increase with altitude. Snow drift accumulations are to be evaluated with care and prudence.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

As a consequence of warming during the day and solar radiation moist snow slides and avalanches are possible. This applies in particular on steep east, south and west facing slopes below approximately 2800 m.

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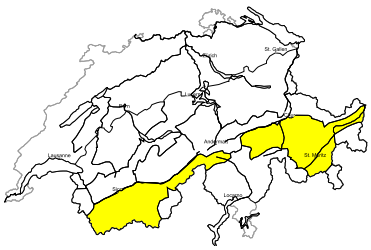
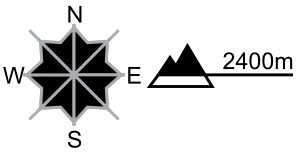
region D — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



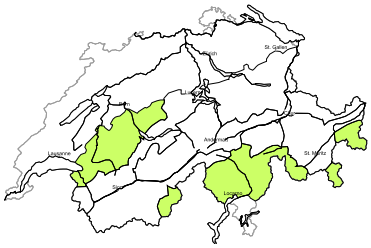
Danger description

The more recent snow drift accumulations are mostly small but in some cases prone to triggering. They are to be found adjacent to the ridge line and in gullies and bowls. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain.
Additionally in very isolated cases avalanches can be released in deep layers and reach medium size. These avalanche prone locations are very rare but barely recognisable, even to the trained eye. They are to be found in particular on little used, rather lightly snow-covered north facing slopes above approximately 2400 m.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

As a consequence of warming during the day and solar radiation moist snow slides and avalanches are possible. This applies in particular on steep east, south and west facing slopes below approximately 2800 m.

region E — Level 1, low



Snow drifts

Mostly small snow drift accumulations have formed. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in particular in extreme terrain. Apart from the danger of being buried, restraint should be exercised in particular in view of the danger of avalanches sweeping people along and giving rise to falls.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

As a consequence of warming during the day and solar radiation moist snow slides and avalanches are possible. This applies in particular on steep east, south and west facing slopes below approximately 2800 m.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 20.4.2017, 17:00

Snowpack

Since last weekend in northeastern regions, large amounts of fresh fallen snow have been registered and in many places large-sized snowdrift accumulations and cornices have formed or been deposited at high altitudes. As a result of the low temperatures, the fresh fallen snow is quite loosely-packed and is consolidating only very slowly. As a consequence of the northeasterly winds, additional snowdrift accumulations have formed. The most recently formed layers in particular are prone to triggering.
Deeply embedded inside the snow cover there are layers of faceted-crystal snow. These are most likely to be trigger-sensitive on the seldom-skied north-facing slopes of southern Valais and Grisons at altitudes between 2400 and 3000 m.
The snowpack surface has become wet up to approximately 2600 m on east-, south- and west-facing slopes. During the night a breakable melt-freeze crust tends to form. Moist-snow avalanches can be expected more than anywhere else in the major areas of heavy precipitation on steep, sunny slopes and on steep, grass-covered slopes which were bare of snow prior to this period of precipitation.

Observed weather on Thursday, 20.4.2017

Nocturnal skies in western and in southern regions were clear. On the northern flank of the Alps and in northern Grisons, there was 5 to 15 cm of new fallen snow registered which fell down to low-lying areas in showers, before skies cleared up there as well. Thereby, the five-day long period of snowfall in northern and eastern regions came to an end.
During the daytime it was predominantly sunny, accompanied by low-lying cloudbanks in northern regions.

Fresh snow

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

- central and eastern sectors of the northern flank of the Alps not including southern Urseren, eastern Bernese Alps: 70 to 100 cm over widespread areas; from Schächental over the Glarner Alps as far as Walensee, 150 to 200 cm;
- eastern Bernese Oberland, northern Surselva, northern Grisons, Albulatal, northern Lower Engadine: 30 to 60 cm; as much as 70 cm from place to place;
- Vaud and Fribourg Alps, western Bernese Oberland, northern Valais, remaining parts of Gotthard region: 15 to 30 cm;
- in the other regions of Switzerland: 5 to 15 cm; in the furthermost southern regions it remained dry.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, between -5 °C in western regions; -9 °C in eastern regions; and -3 °C in southern regions.

Wind

Winds were northeasterly, blowing at light to moderate strength, blowing intermittently at strong velocity on the Alpine ridges and in southern regions.

Weather forecast through Friday, 21.4.2017

Following a night of clear skies it will be sunny, accompanied by high-altitude cloudbanks in northeastern regions.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m 0 °C in western regions, -4 °C in eastern regions and +3 °C in southern regions.

Wind

Winds will be northerly to northeasterly, blowing at light to moderate strength; at moderate to strong velocity in high alpine regions.

Avalanche bulletin through Friday, 21 April 2017

Outlook through Sunday, 23.4.2017

Saturday

On Friday night, skies will be clear. During the daytime on Saturday it will be sunny in western and southern regions. In northern and eastern regions it will be sunny to start with, subsequently clouds will move in from the northeast during the course of the day. During the afternoon, light snowfall is expected to set in above approximately 1400 m. The danger of dry-snow avalanches will diminish. In the regions with solar radiation, the danger of wet-snow avalanches will increase somewhat during the course of the day.

Sunday

On Saturday night, skies in western and southern regions will be clear; then during the daytime on Sunday it will turn predominantly sunny. In northern and eastern regions, nocturnal skies will be overcast and a small amount of snowfall is anticipated above approximately 1200 m. During the morning hours of Sunday the snowfall will come to an end and during the course of the day it will become increasingly sunny from the west. Avalanche danger is not expected to change significantly.