

## Heightened avalanche danger along Main Alpine Ridge

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### Avalanche danger

#### Dry-snow avalanches

In the high alpine regions of the Main Alpine Ridge and of the furthestmost western parts of the Lower Valais, treacherous avalanche conditions prevail on Saturday. Both fresh fallen and freshly drifted snow can be triggered even by one single skier or freerider, even naturally triggered avalanches are possible. Once they trigger, avalanches can grow to medium size. On Sunday and Monday, the likelihood of avalanches triggering is expected to decrease significantly. However, from place to place predominantly small-sized snowdrift accumulations will form which will be prone to triggering in some places. A prudent route selection is important.

In the remaining high alpine regions of Switzerland, the major peril lies in the predominantly small-sized snowdrift accumulations. These drifted masses can be triggered even by one sole skier or freerider from place to place. They should be evaluated with special caution.

#### Wet-snow avalanches

On Saturday in the major areas of precipitation, numerous moist-snow avalanches can be expected from the fresh fallen snow as a result of the foehn-induced bright skies. On Sunday and Monday the danger of wet-snow avalanches will increase over widespread areas during the course of the day as a consequence of daytime warming and solar radiation. Tours in outlying terrain should be brought to a close early in the day.

## Snow and weather

### Snowpack

In the high alpine regions of the Main Alpine Ridge, there was heavy snowfall over widespread areas on Friday. As a result of the intermittently strong-velocity southerly winds, snowdrift accumulations formed anew.

In the remaining high alpine regions of Switzerland, predominantly small-sized snowdrift accumulations formed which in some places are prone to triggering.

Below approximately 3000 m the snow cover has become thoroughly wet as a result of intermittently heavy rainfall in the major areas of precipitation more than anywhere else, including on north-facing slopes. As a consequence of daytime warming and solar radiation, the fresh fallen snow will swiftly become thoroughly wet even in high alpine regions. If an avalanche triggers it can fracture down to more deeply embedded layers and subsequently sweep away the entire snowpack with it.

### Weather review to Friday, 19 May

Apart from the foehn-induced bright intervals, skies were heavily overcast. In southern regions there was heavy precipitation. The snowfall level lay at 2800 m to start with, subsequently descended down to nearly 2400 m in southern regions, in northern regions down to nearly 2000 m. Above approximately 2800 m, the following amounts of fresh fallen snow were registered between Thursday afternoon and Friday afternoon:

- Upper Valais part of Main Alpine Ridge on the Italian border from Simplon region into Goms, western Ticino: 50 to 70 cm;
- furthestmost western part of Lower Valais, remaining parts of the Main Alpine Ridge from Great St. Bernard to the Corvatsch: 30 to 50 cm;
- regions bordering the Main Alpine Ridge to the north: 10 to 30 cm; in other regions of Switzerland, less.

Winds were southerly, blowing at moderate to strong velocity during the night. During the daytime, winds shifted to westerly and subsequently slackened off somewhat.

### Weather outlook through Monday, 22 May

On Friday night the precipitation will come to an end in southern regions. During the daytime on Saturday it will become partly sunny as a result of northerly winds. In northern regions skies are expected to remain heavily overcast. The snowfall level will descend in northern regions down to nearly 1700 m, in southern regions down to nearly 2200 m. Above approximately 2500 m on the northern flank of the Alps, in Ticino and in Grisons, 5 to 10 cm of fresh fallen snow is anticipated.

On Saturday night in western regions skies will already be clear, particularly in high alpine regions. In eastern regions, skies will be overcast. During the daytime on Sunday, it will be quite sunny above approximately 2500 m. The zero-degree level will ascend to approximately 3200 m.

On Monday, following clear nocturnal skies, it is expected to be quite sunny.

Winds will be northerly, on Saturday blowing at moderate to strong velocity. On Sunday, winds will slacken off and shift to westerly. On Monday, a light to moderate-strength westerly wind will prevail.

## Outlook

Following a night of relatively clear skies, it will be sunny on Tuesday, except for some convective cloud build-up. The danger of dry-snow avalanches will continue to diminish. The danger of wet-snow avalanches will increase during the course of the day.

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