Avalanche bulletin for Saturday, 16 December 2017

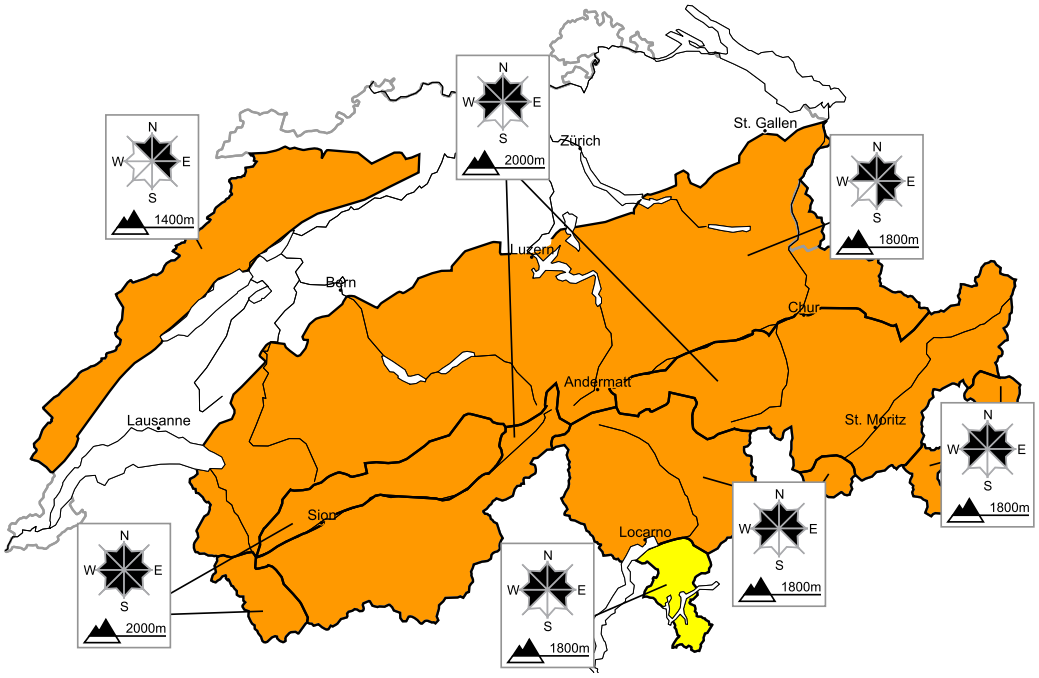
16.12.2017, 07:42

Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area

Edition: 16.12.2017, 08:00 / Next update: 16.12.2017, 17:00

Avalanche danger

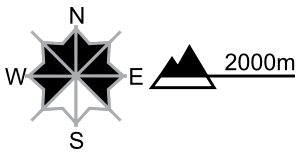
updated on 16.12.2017, 08:00



region A — Level 3, considerable

Old snow, snow drifts

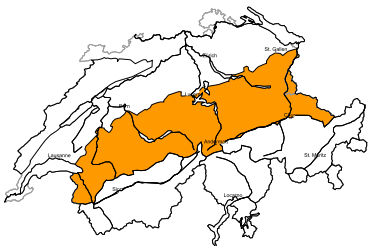
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

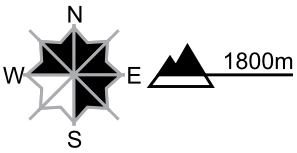
The fresh and older snow drift accumulations are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack in particular on west, north and east facing slopes. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches, including dangerously large ones.
In the afternoon further snow drift accumulations will form. This applies adjacent to the ridge line and in pass areas in all aspects.
Experience in the assessment of avalanche danger is required.

region B — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The sometimes large snow drift accumulations of the last three days represent the main danger. They can be released, especially at their margins,. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches in some places, including dangerously large ones.
Avalanches can additionally in very isolated cases be released in the weakly bonded old snow at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack, when entering gullies and bowls for example. These avalanche prone locations are but barely recognisable.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

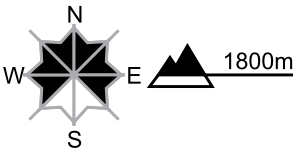
Full-depth avalanches

On steep grassy slopes small and, in isolated cases, medium-sized full-depth avalanches are possible. This applies in particular on steep east, south and west facing slopes below approximately 2200 m as well as on north facing slopes below approximately 1800 m.
Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided as far as possible.

region C — Level 3, considerable

Old snow, snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh and older snow drift accumulations are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack in particular on west, north and east facing slopes. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches, including dangerously large ones.
In the afternoon snow drift accumulations will form, especially on south facing slopes.
Experience in the assessment of avalanche danger is required.

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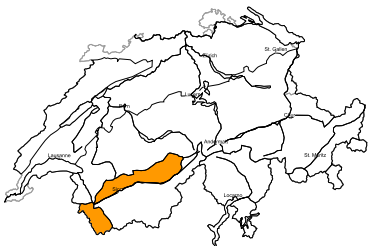
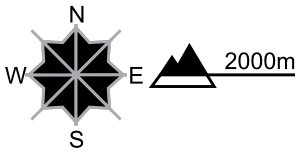
region D — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



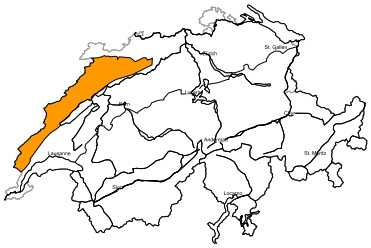
Danger description

The sometimes large snow drift accumulations of the last three days represent the main danger. They can be released, especially at their margins,. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches in some places, including dangerously large ones.
In the afternoon mostly small snow drift accumulations will form, especially at elevated altitudes.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Full-depth avalanches

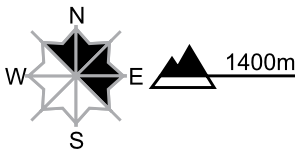
On steep grassy slopes small and, in isolated cases, medium-sized full-depth avalanches are possible. This applies in particular on steep east, south and west facing slopes below approximately 2200 m as well as on north facing slopes below approximately 1800 m. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided as far as possible.

region E — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



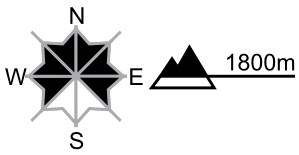
Danger description

The fresh and older snow drift accumulations represent the main danger. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence especially in very steep terrain. Backcountry touring calls for careful route selection.

region F — Level 2, moderate

Old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Avalanches can in some places be released by people, but they will be small in most cases. These avalanche prone locations are to be found in particular on very steep shady slopes. Backcountry touring calls for careful route selection.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 15.12.2017, 17:00

Snowpack

Over the last few days in many places, wide ranging snowdrift accumulations have formed on north and east-facing slopes more than anywhere else. These snowdrifts have stabilised increasingly, but are still able to be triggered as avalanches by one single skier or freerider.
The basis of the snow cover is weak, particularly in the southern part of the Valais, in the Ticino, in central Grisons, in the Engadine and in the southern valleys of Grisons, including in zones at the edge of forests. In these regions, avalanches can fracture down inside the old snowpack. However, also in the remaining regions of Switzerland there are weak layers inside the snow cover from place to place, particularly in west-to-north-to-east facing slopes above 2000 m. Isolated fractures in the old snow cannot be ruled out.
In the western and northern regions where snowfall has been heaviest, gliding avalanches continue to be possible.

Observed weather on Friday, 15.12.2017

During the night there was snowfall over widespread areas, intermittently intensive in the western part of Lower Valais and in the eastern sector of the northern flank of the Alps more than anywhere else. In the early morning hours the snowall slackened off in all regions of Switzerland. The snowfall level descended from 1500 m down to low lying areas. During the course of the day, skies were variably cloudy and it remained dry for the most part.

Fresh snow

Between Thursday afternoon and Friday morning above 2000 m:
- central and eastern sectors of the northern flank of the Alps, northern part of Valais, western part of Lower Valais, northern part of Ticino: 30 to 50 cm; in the Santis region as much as 70 cm;
- western sector of the northern flank of the Alps, Jura region: 20 to 40 cm;
- remaining parts of Valais, Grisons, remaining sectors of the southern flank of the Alps: 5 to 15 cm.

Overall between Wednesday evening and Friday morning, there has been 50 to 80 cm of snowfall in the areas of the Valais along the French border and in northern Valais west of the Aletsch region.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, approximately -8 °C.

Wind

During the night, winds were blowing at moderate to strong velocity, during the daytime at moderate strength, from the west.

Weather forecast through Saturday, 16.12.2017

Nighttime skies will be partially clear. During the morning in western and northern regions, snowfall is expected to set in. During the day along the northern flank of the Alps and in the Lower Valais, a small amount of snowfall is anticipated. The snowfall level will be at low lying areas. In the Upper Valais and in Grisons, skies will partially brighten and it is expected to remain dry. On the southern flank of the Alps it will become increasingly sunny as a result of northerly winds.

Fresh snow

Above 1500 m: on the northern flank and in the western part of Lower Valais, 10 to 20 cm; in the other regions of Switzerland 5 to 10 cm; on the southern flank of the Alps it will remain dry.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, approximately -8 °C.

Wind

Winds will be blowing at moderate strength from westerly directions, subsequently shifting to northerly.

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Outlook through Monday, 18.12.2017

In northern regions on both days skies will be heavily overcast for the most part. Intermittent snowfall is anticipated. On the northern flank of the Alps, it is possible that by Monday evening more than a half-meter of snow will fall from region to region. In southern regions it will be quite sunny, as a result of the tendency towards northerly winds, and it will remain dry. The avalanche danger could increase somewhat in northern regions. In the other regions danger levels are not expected to change significantly. In the western and northern regions where snowfall has been heaviest, gliding avalanches continue to be possible.