Avalanche bulletin for Saturday, 23 December 2017

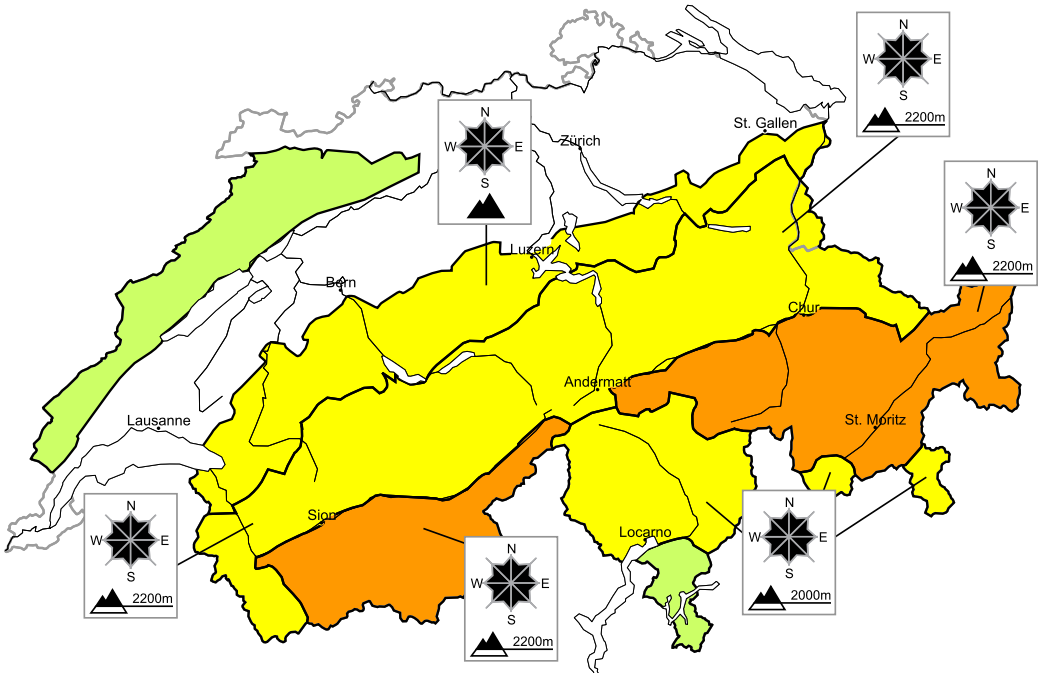
23.12.2017, 07:28

Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered in some regions

Edition: 23.12.2017, 08:00 / Next update: 23.12.2017, 17:00

Avalanche danger

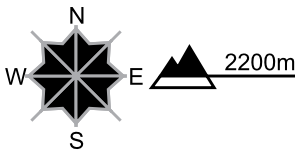
updated on 23.12.2017, 08:00



region A — Level 3, considerable

Old snow, snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Single winter sport participants can release avalanches as before. These can be triggered in the old snowpack. Caution is to be exercised at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack, when entering gullies and bowls for example. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger.
As a consequence of the northerly wind mostly small snow drift accumulations have formed. This applies in particular on south facing slopes at elevated altitudes. The snow drift accumulations can still be released in some cases. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence.
Experience in the assessment of avalanche danger is required.

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

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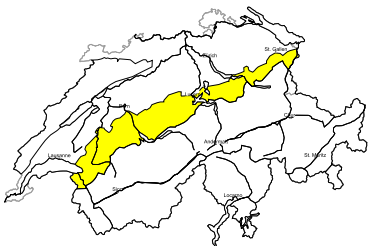
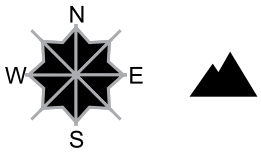
region B — Level 2, moderate



Full-depth avalanches

Avalanche prone locations



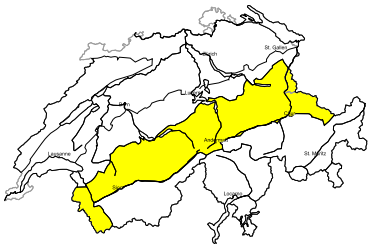
Danger description

On steep grassy slopes more small and medium-sized full-depth avalanches are to be expected. This applies in all aspects. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

Old snow

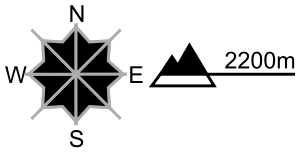
Dry avalanches can be released in near-surface layers, mostly by large additional loads in isolated cases. Caution is to be exercised at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack, when entering gullies and bowls for example. These avalanche prone locations are to be found in particular above approximately 2000 m. Careful route selection is recommended.

region C — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh and somewhat older snow drift accumulations are to be found at high altitudes and in high Alpine regions, in particular adjacent to the ridge line and in gullies and bowls. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain.
Avalanches can additionally be released in near-surface layers, mostly by large additional loads in isolated cases. These avalanche prone locations are rather rare but barely recognisable, even to the trained eye. Defensive route selection is advisable.

Wet and full-depth avalanches

On steep grassy slopes more small and medium-sized full-depth avalanches are to be expected. This applies in particular on steep east, south and west facing slopes below approximately 2400 m as well as on north facing slopes below approximately 2000 m. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.
On extremely steep sunny slopes moist snow slides are to be expected as the day progresses.

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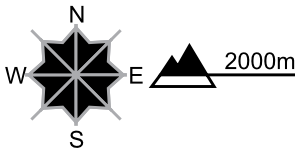
region D — Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts, old snow

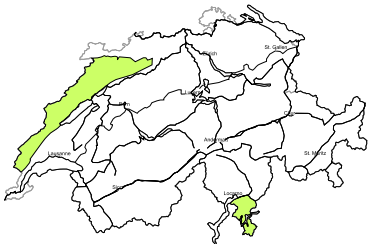
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of the northerly wind clearly visible snow drift accumulations have formed, in particular on south facing slopes at high altitude. These can still be released in some cases. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain.
Avalanches can additionally in isolated cases be released in the old snowpack, mostly by large additional loads. Caution is to be exercised at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack. These avalanche prone locations are rare but barely recognisable, even to the trained eye. Defensive route selection is advisable.

region E — Level 1, low



Full-depth avalanches

A widespread favourable avalanche situation will prevail. On very steep slopes individual full-depth avalanches and moist snow slides are possible. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided as far as possible.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 22.12.2017, 17:00

Snowpack

The fresh snow from Friday was deposited amidst relatively little wind influence. Thus, by and large only in high altitude ridgeline terrain and pass areas were smallish-sized snowdrift accumulations generated.
There is more snow on the ground than is customary for this juncture of the season in most regions, as much as double the amount on the northern flank of the Alps and in the northern part of Valais. In northern and western regions where snowfall has been heaviest, the more deeply embedded layers of the snowpack are well structured by and large. For the avalanche triggerings here, it is the superficial layers of fresh snow and freshly formed snowdrift accumulations, together with gliding avalanches, which stand in the foreground. Both the frequency and the size of snowdrifts tend to increase with ascending altitude. In the southern part of the Valais, in parts of Ticino, in central Grisons, in the Engadine and in the southern valleys of Grisons, the base of the snow cover is weak in some places. In these regions, fractures in the weak layers near to the ground are also possible.
Gliding avalanches continue to be expected in the western regions and on the northern flank of the Alps, where snowfall has been heaviest, more than anywhere else.

Observed weather on Friday, 22.12.2017

Skies were overcast, accompanied by bright intervals only in southern regions. There was a small amount of precipitation on the northern flank of the Alps and in Grisons more than anywhere else. The snowfall level ascended temporarily to over 2000 m in western regions; in eastern regions, to 1200 to 1600 m.

Fresh snow

Above approximately 2500 m, the following amounts of fresh snow were registered:
· Northern flank of the Alps and Prättigau: 5 to 15 cm;
· remaining regions of Switzerland: only a few centimeters; or else it remained dry.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, between 0 °C in northern regions and +3 °C in southern regions.

Wind

· During the night, winds will be blowing at moderate to strong velocity at high altitudes, slackening off somewhat during the daytime, from the north.
· In southern regions, a moderate-strength foehn wind will be blowing.

Weather forecast through Saturday, 23.12.2017

In eastern regions, nocturnal skies will be predominantly overcast. In western and southern regions, skies will be clear. On Saturday it will be sunny and mild in the mountains.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m in western and southern regions +5 °C, in eastern regions -1 °C.

Wind

In southern regions and at high altitudes, winds will be northerly, blowing at moderate strength; reaching strong velocity in some places in the central and eastern sectors of the Main Alpine Ridge.

Outlook through Monday, 25.12.2017

It will be sunny and mild in the mountains The zero-degree level will be at about 3000 m. On Christmas Eve, southwesterly winds are expected to intensify during the course of the day. The danger of dry-snow avalanches will decrease, but only incrementally in the inneralpine regions as a result of the poor snowpack structuring. Gliding avalanches continue to be possible on very steep, sunny slopes; moist sluffs are also possible.