Avalanche bulletin for Thursday, 28 December 2017

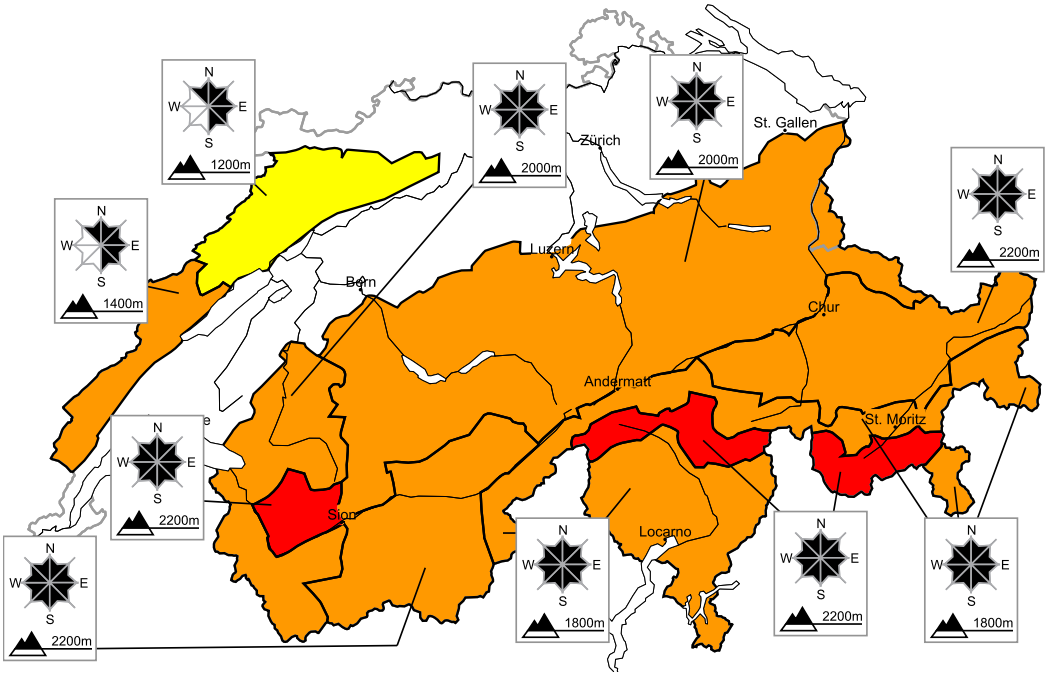
28.12.2017, 08:03

High avalanche danger will be encountered in some regions

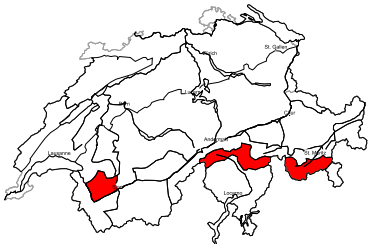
Edition: 28.12.2017, 08:00 / Next update: 28.12.2017, 17:00

Avalanche danger

updated on 28.12.2017, 08:00

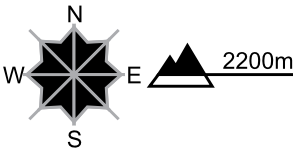


region A — Level 4, high



Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are poorly bonded with the old snowpack. Natural avalanches are possible. In some places avalanches can release the weakly bonded old snow as well and reach large size. Exposed parts of transportation routes can be endangered.
Single winter sport participants can release avalanches easily, including dangerously large ones. The conditions are dangerous for backcountry touring and other off-piste activities.

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

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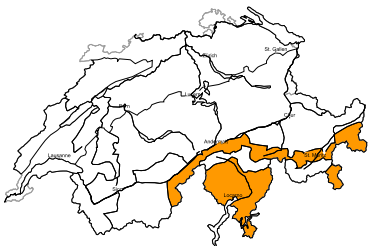
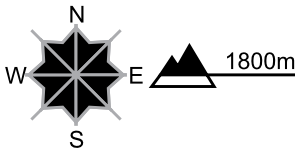
region B — Level 3, considerable



Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

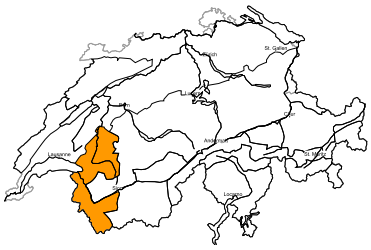
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

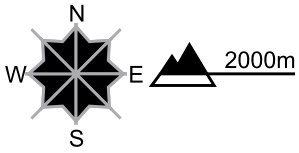
The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are poorly bonded with the old snowpack. Single persons can release avalanches. Natural avalanches are possible. Avalanches can release the weakly bonded old snow as well and reach a dangerous size. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for caution and restraint.

region C — Level 3, considerable



Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are poorly bonded with the old snowpack. Single persons can release avalanches. Natural avalanches are possible. Avalanches can reach medium size. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for caution and restraint.

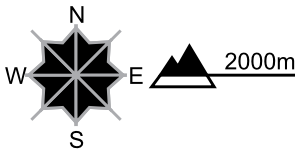
Full-depth avalanches

On steep grassy slopes individual full-depth avalanches are possible.

region D — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and wind further snow drift accumulations have formed. They are to be found in particular adjacent to the ridge line and in gullies and bowls in all aspects. They can be released by a single winter sport participant. Mostly avalanches are small. The number and size of avalanche prone locations will increase as the day progresses. At elevated altitudes avalanche prone locations are more prevalent. The fresh snow drift accumulations are to be bypassed.

Full-depth avalanches

On steep grassy slopes individual full-depth avalanches are possible.

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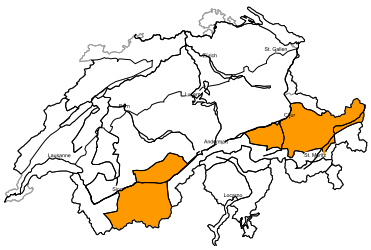
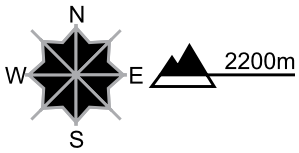
region E — Level 3, considerable



Old snow, snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



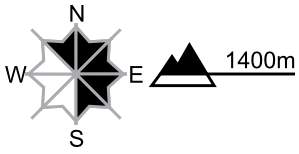
Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and wind the snow drift accumulations have increased in size additionally. They can be released by a single winter sport participant, but they will be small in most cases. At elevated altitudes avalanche prone locations are more prevalent. The fresh snow drift accumulations are to be avoided as far as possible.
Avalanches can additionally in some places be released in the weakly bonded old snow. These can reach dangerously large size. Avalanche prone locations are to be found in areas where the snow cover is rather shallow, in particular on very steep west, north and east facing slopes. These avalanche prone locations are rather rare but barely recognisable, even to the trained eye. Whumpfing sounds can indicate the danger. Careful route selection and spacing between individuals are recommended.

region F — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

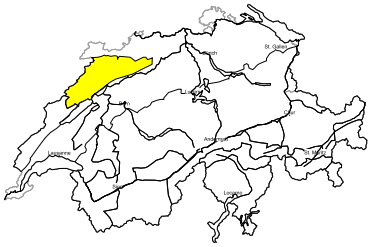
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

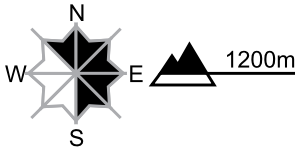
As a consequence of fresh snow and wind avalanche prone snow drift accumulations have formed. These are to be found in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. These are to be avoided as far as possible.

region G — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and wind mostly small snow drift accumulations have formed. These are to be found in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. These are to be avoided in particular in very steep terrain.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 27.12.2017, 17:00

Snowpack

The newly formed layers of fresh snow and snowdrifts have been deposited for the most part on top of an old snowpack surface which at high altitude displays striking impact from wind. On wind-protected west-facing, north-facing and east-facing slopes at altitudes between approximately 2200 and 2800 m, the fresh layers were deposited on top of a loosely-packed, faceted-crystal riddled old snowpack surface and particularly there, are prone to triggering.
The snow cover in the northern and western regions where snowfall has been heaviest is favourably structured in general. Weakened layers more deeply embedded inside the snowpack can be triggered only seldom. In the southern Valais, in the northern parts of the Ticino, in central Grisons, in the Engadine and in the southern valleys of Grisons, the base of the snowpack is frequently weak. In those regions, avalanches can be triggered in the lowermost layers of the snowpack near ground level.
The activity of gliding avalanches has diminished significantly during the last few days. In the northern and western regions where snowfall has recently been heaviest, more than anywhere else, releases of gliding avalanches are still possible in isolated cases.

Observed weather on Wednesday, 27.12.2017

Apart from the most recent bright intervals in northeastern regions this morning, skies were overcast. In southern and western regions there was snowfall.

Fresh snow

By Wednesday morning above approximately 1000 m, the following amounts of fresh snow were registered:
- southern Simplon region, Main Alpine Region from the Gotthard Pass to the Bernina Pass and southwards therefrom: 20 to 40 cm; from place to place as much as 50 cm;
- Chablais, furthermost western part of Lower Valais, remaining parts of Main Alpine Ridge, Jura region: 5 to 15 cm; in other regions, only a few centimeters.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, -4 °C.

Wind

- Winds at high altitudes were blowing at strong to storm strength from southerly directions.
- In the Alpine valleys, a strong-velocity foehn wind prevailed intermittently.

During the afternoon, winds slackened off.

Weather forecast through Thursday, 28.12.2017

On Wednesday night in southern regions, the snowfall will taper off. At the same time in northern regions, snowfall will set in, which subsequently will slacken off during the course of the day from west to east. As of midday in western and southern regions, bright intervals are anticipated, skies in eastern regions are expected to remain heavily overcast for the most part.

Fresh snow

Between Wednesday afternoon and Thursday afternoon above 1000 m, the following amounts of snowfall are anticipated:
- Lower Valais, northern flank of the Alps and Grisons: 15 to 30 cm;
- Upper Valais and Ticino: 5 to 15 cm;
- Jura region: 10 to 20 cm.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, -11 °C in northern regions and -7 °C in southern regions.

Wind

- Winds will be blowing at strong velocity at high altitude, from the northwest.
- In the Ticino, strong northerly foehn winds will be blowing down into the valleys.

Avalanche bulletin for Thursday, 28 December 2017

Outlook through Saturday, 30.12.2017

Friday

During the morning in western regions, final bright intervals are expected, in eastern and southern regions it will be quite sunny. During the course of the day, cloud cover will move in from the west and a small amount of snowfall is expected. The westerly winds will intensify. The avalanche situation is not expected to change significantly.

Saturday

On Saturday in western and northern regions, intensive precipitation is expected. The snowfall level will rapidly ascend to 2000 m. The danger of dry-snow avalanches at high altitudes and the danger of wet-snow avalanches at low and intermediate altitudes will increase significantly in western and in northern regions. The southern regions will be relatively little affected by the precipitation and the rising temperatures. Thus, the avalanche situation is not expected to change significantly there.