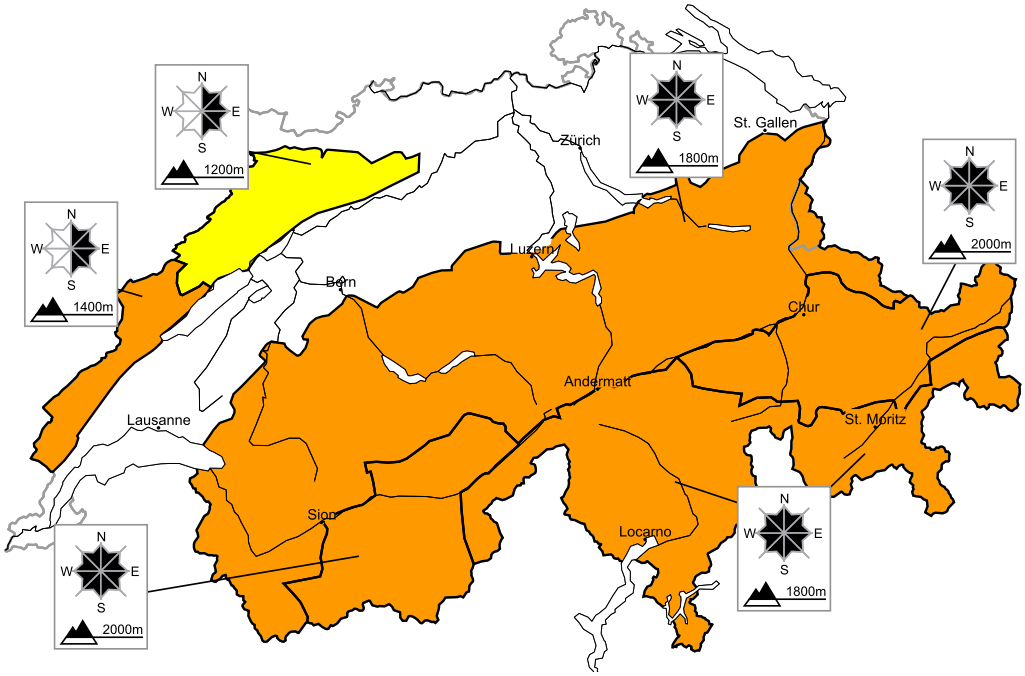
Considerable avalanche danger will prevail

Edition: 29.12.2017, 08:00 / Next update: 29.12.2017, 17:00

Avalanche danger

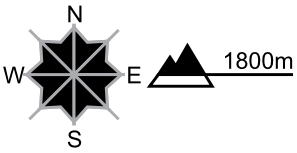
updated on 29.12.2017, 08:00



region A — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations

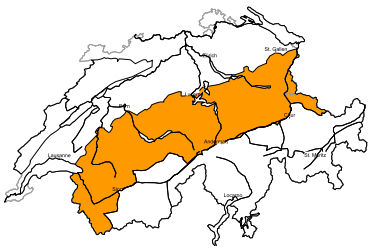


Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are poorly bonded with the old snowpack. Single persons can release avalanches. Only isolated natural avalanches are possible. In some places avalanches can release the weakly bonded old snow as well and reach a dangerous size. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

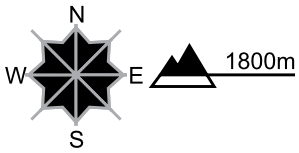
WSL Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research SLF
www.slf.ch

region B — Level 3, considerable



Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



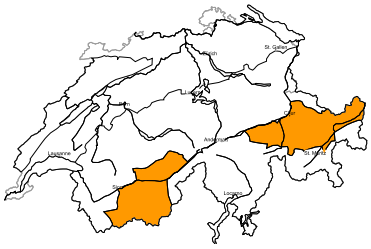
Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are bonding only slowly with the old snowpack. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches, including medium-sized ones. In particular in the regions exposed to heavier precipitation individual natural avalanches are possible. At elevated altitudes avalanche prone locations are more prevalent. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Full-depth avalanches

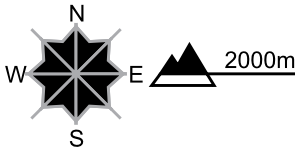
On steep grassy slopes individual full-depth avalanches are possible.

region C — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



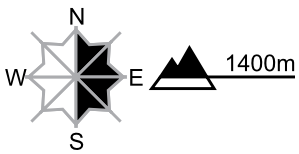
Danger description

In particular at elevated altitudes avalanche prone snow drift accumulations have formed. They can be released by a single winter sport participant and reach medium size. 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. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

region D — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



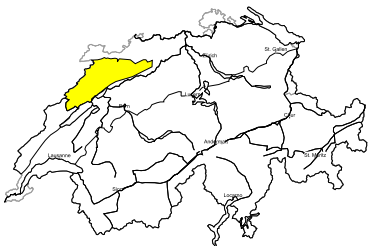
Danger description

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.

WSL Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research SLF
www.slf.ch

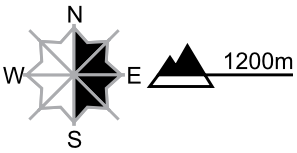
region E

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.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 28.12.2017, 17:00

Snowpack

The loosely-packed fresh snow has been transported by northwesterly winds at high altitudes more than anywhere else, but also at intermediate altitudes in the Ticino. The layers of fresh fallen and freshly drifted snow were deposited on top of an encrusted surface in some places, or else (at altitudes of approximately 2200 to 2800 m on somewhat wind-protected west-facing, north-facing and east facing slopes) on top of a loosely-packed, metamorphosed, faceted old snowpack surface in other places. These layers of snow are frequently prone to triggering.
The snow cover in the northern and western regions where snowfall has been heaviest is favourably structured by and large. The more deeply embedded weakened layers can be triggered only in rare cases. 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 to the ground.
In the northern and western regions where snowfall has been heaviest, more than anywhere else, gliding avalanches continue to be possible in isolated cases.

Observed weather on Thursday, 28.12.2017

During the night the snowfall in southern regions came to an end. At the same time in northern regions, snowfall set in. During the daytime in the Ticino it was predominantly sunny as a result of northerly winds; in the other regions of Switzerland skies were overcast for the most part. The snowfall slackened off from west to east during the course of the day.

Fresh snow

Between the onset of the snowfall on Tuesday night and Thursday afternoon, the following amounts of snowfall have been registered above approximately 1000 m:

- southern Simplon region, central sector of the southern flank of the Alps, from the Rheinwald as far as Julier Pass, Upper Engadine, Val Bregaglia and Val Poschiavo: 50 to 70 cm;
- remaining regions of Switzerland: generally 30 to 50 cm; from Val d'Hérens into the valleys of Visp, in the Aletsch region as well as from Grindelwald over the Susten region and the Oberhalp into the Surselva, in northern Grisons and in the Lower Engadine: 10 to 30 cm;
- Jura region: in the west, 20 to 40 cm; in the east, 10 to 20 cm.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, between -12 °C in northwestern regions and -8 °C in southeastern regions.

Wind

- Winds at high altitudes were blowing at strong to storm strength from the northwest.
- In the Ticino, a northerly foehn wind was blowing down to the valleys.

Weather forecast through Friday, 29.12.2017

During the night on Thursday, the snowfall will come to an end, including in eastern regions. During the daytime on Friday, it will be sunny to start with, subsequently, cloud cover will move in from the west during the course of the morning and in the afternoon a small amount of snowfall is anticipated over widespread areas.

Fresh snow

Only a few centimeters in the Valais, on the northern flank of the Alps and in Grisons.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m -9 °C.

Wind

- Until midday winds will be blowing at moderate strength, at strong velocity in the Ticino, from the north.
- During the afternoon in northern regions, winds will intensify in strength, blowing from the west.

Avalanche bulletin for Friday, 29 December 2017

Outlook through Sunday, 31.12.2017

Saturday

On Saturday in western and northern regions, intensive precipitation is anticipated. The snowfall level is expected to ascend to approximately 2000 m on the northern flank of the Alps during the course of the day. A strong to storm-strength westerly wind will be blowing. 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 northern regions. The southern regions will barely be touched by the precipitation and by the heightened temperatures. Thus, the avalanche situation is not expected to change significantly there.

Sunday

On Saturday night, further precipitation is anticipated in northern regions. The snowfall level will gradually descend somewhat. During the daytime it will be predominantly dry and mild throughout Switzerland. The westerly winds will continue to blow at strong velocity. The danger of wet-snow avalanches will decrease somewhat. The danger of dry-snow avalanches is expected to remain critical.