Avalanche bulletin for Tuesday, 23 January 2018

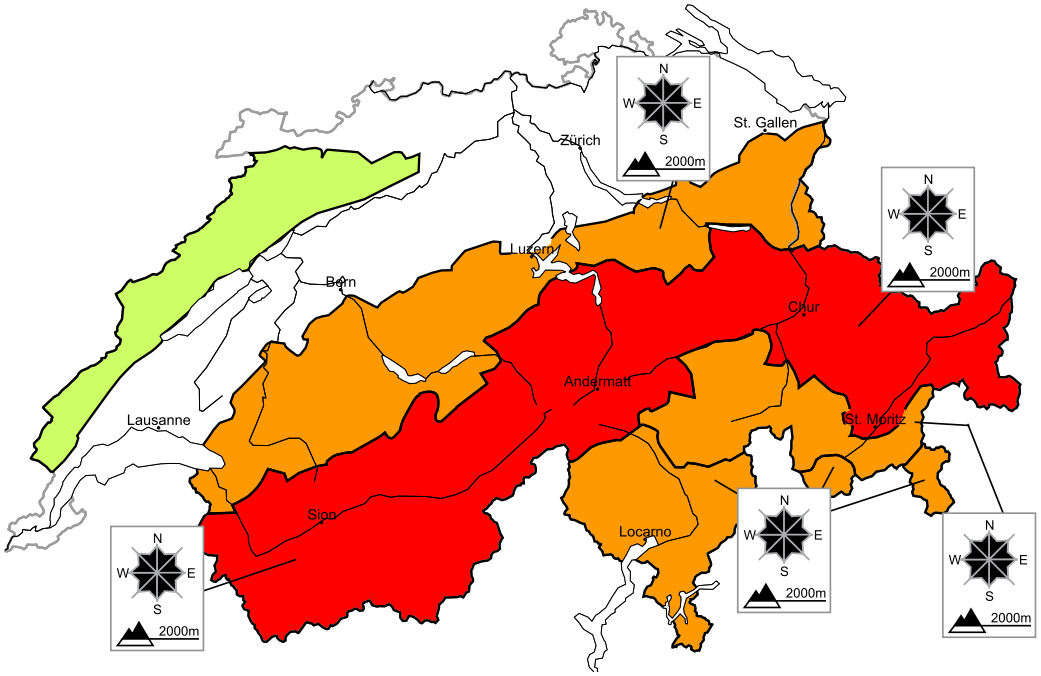
23.1.2018, 07:51

High avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area

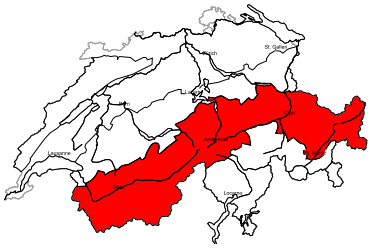
Edition: 23.1.2018, 08:00 / Next update: 23.1.2018, 17:00

Avalanche danger

updated on 23.1.2018, 08:00

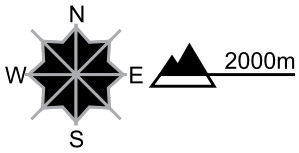


region A | **Level 4, high**



Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

With the end of the precipitation, the natural avalanche activity will appreciably decrease. Individual natural avalanches are however still possible. These can be triggered in deep layers and reach large size. Road closures and the evacuation of endangered buildings can be relaxed once an appropriate review has taken place.

The conditions are very dangerous for snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes.

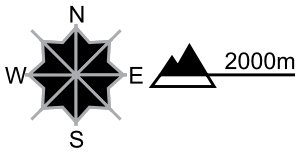
Wet and full-depth avalanches

Below approximately 2200 m full-depth and wet avalanches are to be expected, including quite large ones. This applies in all aspects.

region B — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

With the end of the precipitation, the natural avalanche activity will appreciably decrease. Individual natural avalanches are however still possible. These can reach dangerously large size.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

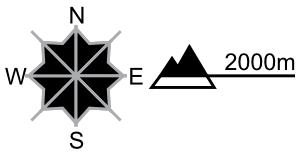
Wet and full-depth avalanches

Below approximately 2200 m full-depth and wet avalanches are to be expected, including quite large ones. This applies in all aspects.

region C — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are prone to triggering. Avalanches can be released, even by a single winter sport participant. Individual natural avalanches are possible. Avalanches can penetrate deep layers and reach dangerously large size.
Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and great restraint.

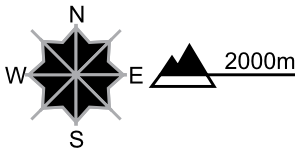
Full-depth avalanches

Below approximately 2200 m full-depth avalanches are to be expected. This applies in all aspects. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks.

region D — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

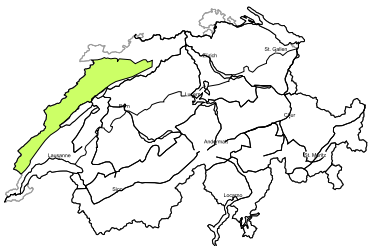
The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations of the last few days are in some cases prone to triggering. As a consequence of the northerly wind further snow drift accumulations will form. Avalanches can be released, even by a single winter sport participant. They can in isolated cases penetrate deep layers. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

Full-depth avalanches

Individual full-depth avalanches are possible. This applies in all aspects below approximately 2200 m. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks.

region E

Level 1, low



Wet and full-depth avalanches

The snowpack is wet all the way through. In particular on extremely steep slopes individual full-depth avalanches and wet snow slides are possible. Apart from the danger of being buried, restraint should be exercised in view of the danger of avalanches sweeping people along and giving rise to falls.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 22.1.2018, 17:00

Snowpack

Following last week's widespread snowfall of 100 to 200 cm, a further 100 cm have fallen over a wide area since Saturday. A significantly smaller quantity of snow fell only in the south. Winds that were frequently strong have given rise to deep snow drift accumulations. As a consequence of warming and rain in the west up to altitudes above 2200 m in some cases, the snowpack has become wet at intermediate altitudes in the north and in Valais.
Numerous large and isolated very large avalanches were reported on Monday. This avalanche activity will persist until the precipitation period ends. Thereafter it will decrease quickly. Isolated large avalanches are still possible, however, during the day as well.
Snow depths are well above average for the time of year. In southern Valais, northern Grisons and northern Lower Engadine, in some cases they are close to the extreme values measured at the end of February 1999. Although weak layers in the bottom part of the old snowpack are covered by thick layers of snow in the north and west, large avalanches may be capable of releasing sections of the old snowpack here. In central Grisons, Engadine and the Grisons southern valleys the old snowpack is weaker, and the release of avalanches in near-ground layers is to be expected.

Observed weather on Monday, 22.01.2018

There was persistent and heavy snowfall. The snowfall level rose to approximately 2000 m at times in the north and in Valais. In Grisons and Ticino it rose to approximately 1500 m. The far south was sunny.

Fresh snow

In the period from Sunday afternoon until Monday afternoon, 50 to 80 cm of snow fell over a wide area on the northern Alpine ridge from the Trient region to the Glarus Alps and in Valais, and 30 to 50 cm fell in the other regions on the northern flank of the Alps, in the other areas of the Gotthard region, and in northern Grisons and Lower Engadine. From the start of the precipitation on Saturday evening, the following aggregate amounts of snow have fallen:

- Northern flank of the Alps, Valais, Gotthard region, northern and central Grisons, northern Lower Engadine: 80 to 120 cm, but more in some localities
- Rest of northern Ticino and rest of Grisons: 40 to 60 cm, but less in the far south
- In the Jura most of the fresh snow has since been melted by rain

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m: about +2 °C in the west and about 0 °C elsewhere

Wind

During the night, storm force at times; during the day, moderate to strong; from the west to northwest.

Weather forecast through Tuesday, 23.01.2018

The precipitation will continue into the night. The snowfall level will be approximately 1400 to 1800 m in most places, but approximately 1200 m in Grisons. During the day, it will become increasingly sunny from the west. It will be mostly sunny in the south.

Fresh snow

From Monday evening until the precipitation ceases during the night, the following amounts of snow will fall above 2000 m:

- Regions north of a line between the Rhone and Rhine: 20 to 40 cm
- Southern Valais, northern Grisons; Lower Engadine: 10 to 20 cm, but up to 30 cm in some localities
- Other regions: less than 10 cm, dry in the far south

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m: between -3 °C in the northeast and +1 °C in the west and south

Wind

- At elevated altitudes strong to storm force from the northwest; at intermediate altitudes light to moderate
- In the south during the night the wind will be strong to storm force from the north, even in the valley bottoms, but it will ease during the day

Avalanche bulletin for Tuesday, 23 January 2018

Outlook through Thursday, 25.01.2018

Wednesday

Wednesday will be mostly sunny, and in the north it will be mild with temperatures around +5 °C at 2000 m. The wind will change direction, becoming westerly to southwesterly. The enormous snow quantities of recent days will stabilise quickly so that the risk of large avalanches will decrease significantly. The situation will remain precarious for winter sport participants venturing off piste. The strengthening wind will also give rise to local snow drift accumulations as the day progresses.

Thursday

The morning will be quite sunny, but then cloud will build up from the west and south. The wind will be strong from the southwest, and a foehn wind will develop in the northern valleys. Snow drift accumulations that are prone to triggering will form. Large avalanches are becoming unlikely.