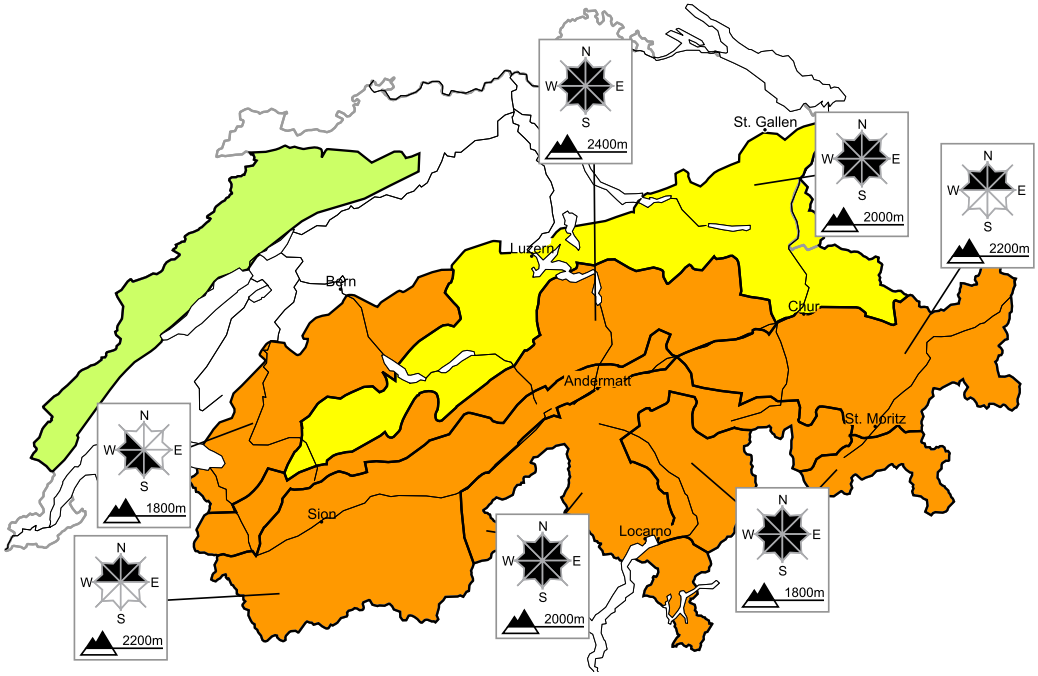
Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area. Fresh snow drifts require caution

Edition: 20.3.2018, 08:00 / Next update: 20.3.2018, 17:00

Avalanche danger

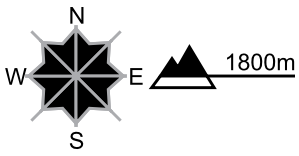
updated on 20.3.2018, 08:00



region A — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

A critical avalanche situation will prevail. As a consequence of the foehn wind from the north the snow drift accumulations will increase in size additionally. The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are poorly bonded with the old snowpack. To some extent avalanches can also be triggered in the old snowpack. This applies in particular on steep north facing slopes. Single snow sport participants can release avalanches easily, including medium-sized ones. Individual natural avalanches are possible. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and great restraint.

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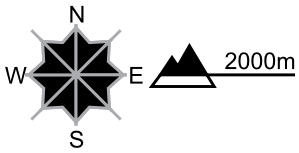
region B — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts, old snow

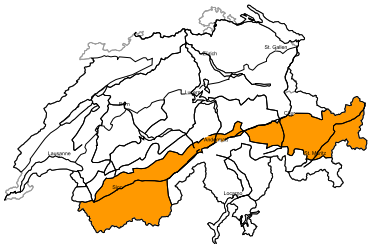
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

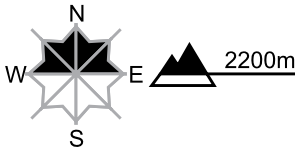
As a consequence of the foehn wind from the north the snow drift accumulations will increase in size. These are poorly bonded with the old snowpack. They can be released, even by a single winter sport participant. Additionally in isolated cases avalanches can also be triggered in the old snowpack and reach medium size. This applies in particular on steep, little used north facing slopes. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

region C — Level 3, considerable



Old snow, snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Avalanches can be released in the old snowpack and reach medium size. The avalanche prone locations are rather rare but difficult to recognise. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger.
As a consequence of the northerly wind avalanche prone snow drift accumulations will form. They are to be found in particular adjacent to the ridge line in all aspects. The prevalence of avalanche prone locations will increase with altitude.
The current avalanche situation calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and careful route selection.

Full-depth avalanches

Below approximately 2400 m individual full-depth avalanches are possible, including quite large ones. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks.

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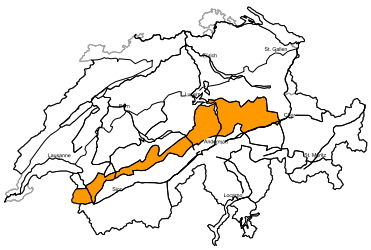
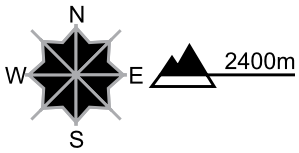
region D — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Fresh snow drift accumulations are to be found in particular adjacent to the ridge line and in gullies and bowls. They are poorly bonded with the old snowpack. In high Alpine regions avalanche prone locations are more widespread. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches. Off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and careful route selection.

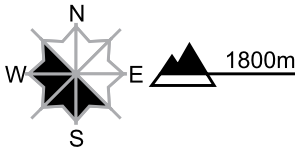
Full-depth avalanches

Below approximately 2400 m individual full-depth avalanches are possible, including quite large ones. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks.

region E — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of the Bise wind precarious snow drift accumulations will form. They are mostly small. The fresh snow drift accumulations can be released easily, even by a single winter sport participant,. They are to be avoided in steep terrain.
Old snow drift accumulations can be released in isolated cases, but mostly only by large additional loads, in all aspects. These avalanche prone locations are rare but barely recognisable, even to the trained eye. Careful route selection is required.

Full-depth avalanches

Below approximately 2400 m individual full-depth avalanches are possible, including quite large ones. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks.

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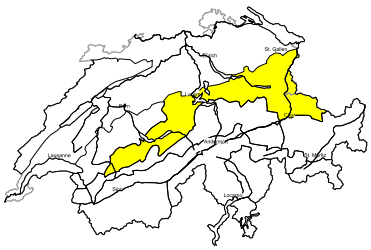
Avalanche bulletin for Tuesday, 20 March 2018

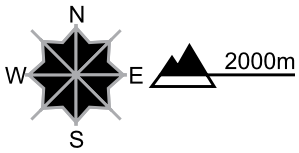
20.3.2018, 07:46

region F — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



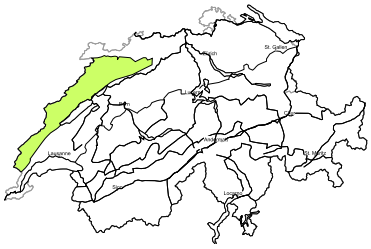
Danger description

Fresh snow drift accumulations are to be found in particular adjacent to the ridge line and in gullies and bowls. They are mostly small but prone to triggering. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain. Older snow drift accumulations are in individual cases still prone to triggering. They are covered with fresh snow and therefore difficult to recognise. Careful route selection is recommended.

Full-depth avalanches

Below approximately 2400 m individual full-depth avalanches are possible, including quite large ones. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks.

region G — Level 1, low



Snow drifts

As a consequence of the Bise wind small snow drift accumulations will form. These are to be evaluated with care and prudence in extreme terrain. Restraint should be exercised because avalanches can sweep people along and give rise to falls.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 19.3.2018, 17:00

Snowpack

Loosely bonded snow fell at the weekend with little wind. In the south, where the largest amounts of fresh snow fell, a moderate to strong foehn wind transported large quantities on Monday. The strengthening bise wind will give rise to snow drift accumulations that are prone to triggering on Tuesday, including in the western Prealps.
Around 40 to 70 cm below the surface, older weak layers are still prone to triggering in some cases, in particular in Valais, Ticino and Grisons. These relatively old avalanche prone locations are to be found on north facing slopes in particular. They are barely recognisable, which makes it more difficult to assess the avalanche danger.
In view of the low temperatures, only isolated gliding avalanches are now likely to occur, but they can still reach a dangerous size.

Observed weather on Monday, 19.03.2018

The weather was mostly cloudy. On the southern flank of the Alps, in central Grisons east of the Hinterrhein, and in Upper Engadine, 10 to 20 cm of snow fell even at low altitudes; elsewhere, up to 10 cm fell over a wide area. During the day there were bright spells in the west, and a northerly wind brought partly sunny weather to northern and central Ticino.

Fresh snow

Since Friday evening, the following amounts of snow have fallen above approximately 1500 m:
- Simplon region, central part of the southern flank of the Alps excluding the Gotthard region, Val Bregaglia and the Bernina region: 40 to 70 cm
- Other regions: 15 to 30 cm over wide area, but only about 10 cm in the eastern part of the northern flank of the Alps and in the Jura

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m: between -7 °C in the north and -3 °C in the south

Wind

The wind direction was northerly:
- It was moderate in the Simplon region, on the main Alpine ridge from the Gotthard region to the Bernina region and to the south, and in Upper Engadine; in the south, a foehn wind reached down to low altitudes
- It was mostly light in the other regions

Weather forecast through Tuesday, 20.03.2018

There will be cold winter temperatures with a strong bise wind. On the northern flank of the Alps, in northern and central Grisons, and in Engadine, it will be frequently cloudy and a little snow will fall, even at low altitudes. In the far west, Valais, the south, and generally in the high Alpine regions, the weather will be quite sunny.

Fresh snow

In the central and eastern parts of the northern flank of the Alps, and in northern and central Grisons, a few centimetres of snow will fall.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m: between a cold -10 °C in the north and -5 °C in the south

Wind

- At elevated altitudes, moderate from the north to northeast
- In the Jura and the western Prealps, a strengthening bise wind as the day progresses
- In the south, a strengthening northerly foehn wind as the day progresses

Avalanche bulletin for Tuesday, 20 March 2018

Outlook through Thursday, 22.03.2018

The cold northeasterly wind flow will persist. On the northern flank of the Alps and in northern and central Grisons on Wednesday it will remain frequently cloudy and a few snowflakes may fall. Otherwise, the weather will be quite sunny on each of the next two days. The strong bise wind in the north and the foehn wind in the south will persist, but the quantities of loosely bonded transportable old snow will gradually decrease. As a consequence, only relatively small fresh snow drift accumulations will form. The danger of dry avalanches will decrease, but only very slowly in Valais and Grisons because of the weak layers in the old snowpack.