Avalanche bulletin for Wednesday, 21 March 2018

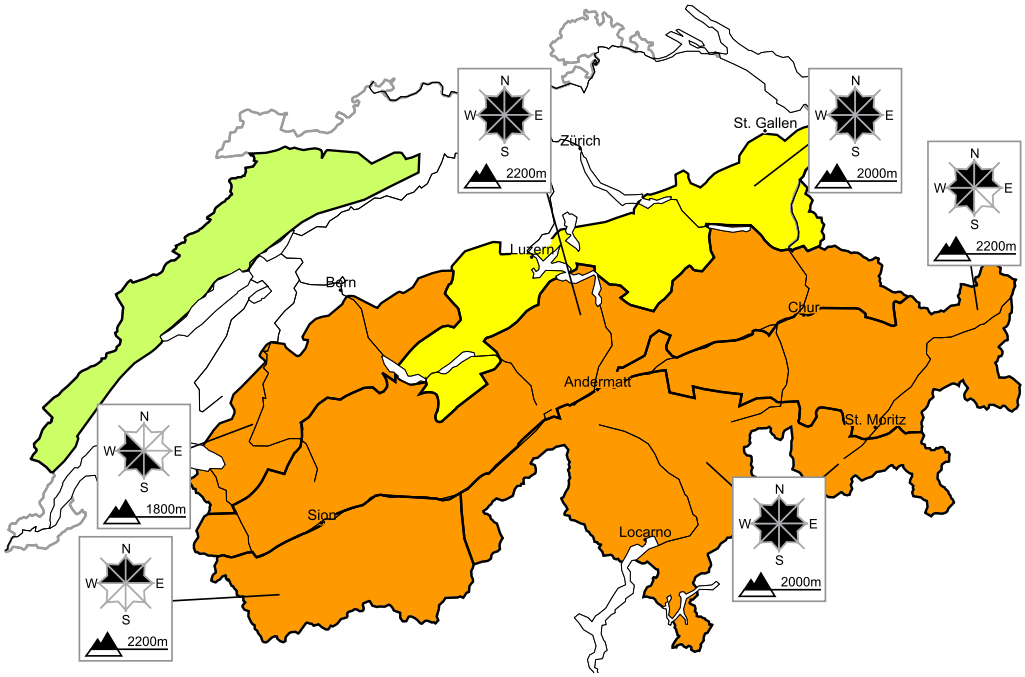
21.3.2018, 07:46

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

Edition: 21.3.2018, 08:00 / Next update: 21.3.2018, 17:00

Avalanche danger

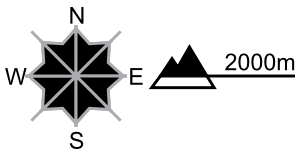
updated on 21.3.2018, 08:00



region A | **Level 3, considerable**

Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The northerly foehn wind has transported the loosely bonded old snow. Sometimes large snow drift accumulations have formed. These can be released by a single winter sport participant. Individual natural avalanches are possible.
Additionally avalanches can also be triggered in the old snowpack and reach medium size. This applies in particular on steep, little used north facing slopes. These avalanche prone locations are rare but barely recognisable. Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

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.

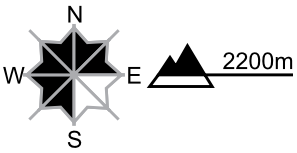
Danger levels 1 low | 2 moderate | 3 consider. | 4 high | 5 very high

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

region B — Level 3, considerable

Old snow, snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

In particular in little used backcountry terrain avalanches can be triggered in the old snow. They can reach medium size in isolated cases. These avalanche prone locations are rather rare but barely recognisable. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger.

As a consequence of the northeasterly wind snow drift accumulations have formed. These can be released by a single winter sport participant. 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.

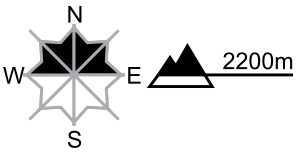
Full-depth avalanches

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

region C — Level 3, considerable

Old snow, snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

In particular in little used backcountry terrain avalanches can be triggered in the old snow. They can reach medium size in isolated cases. These avalanche prone locations are rather rare but barely recognisable. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger.

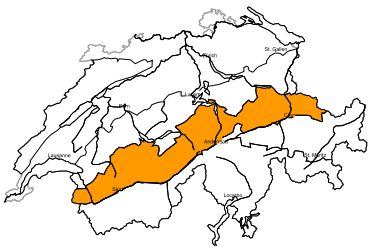
As a consequence of the northeasterly wind avalanche prone snow drift accumulations have formed. They are to be found in particular adjacent to the ridge line and in pass areas in all aspects. The prevalence of avalanche prone locations will increase with altitude.
The current avalanche situation calls 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.

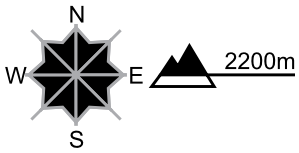
WSL Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research SLF
www.slf.ch

region D — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of the northeasterly wind avalanche prone snow drift accumulations have formed. They are to be avoided in steep terrain. The number and size of avalanche prone locations will increase with altitude. Additionally in very 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. Backcountry touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and careful route selection.

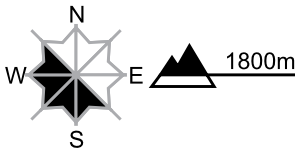
Full-depth avalanches

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

region E — Level 3, considerable

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



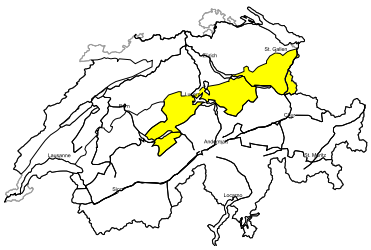
Danger description

As a consequence of the Bise wind precarious snow drift accumulations have formed. These are mostly small but can be released easily. 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

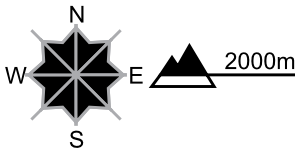
Below approximately 2400 m individual full-depth avalanches are possible, including quite large ones. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks.

region F — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



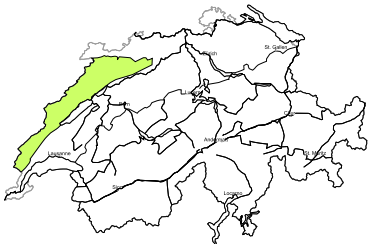
Danger description

Fresh snow drift accumulations are to be found in particular adjacent to the ridge line and in pass areas. They are mostly small but prone to triggering. At elevated altitudes avalanche prone locations are a little more prevalent. The fresh snow drift accumulations are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain.
Old snow drift accumulations can be released in isolated cases, but mostly only by large additional loads,. 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 have formed. 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.

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

Snowpack and weather

updated on 20.3.2018, 17:00

Snowpack

Loosely bonded snow fell at the weekend with little wind. In the meantime the snow has been transported, in particular in the south by the foehn wind and in the western Prealps by the bise wind.
Around 40 to 70 cm below the surface, older weak layers are still prone to triggering in isolated 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 Tuesday, 20.03.2018

It was cold with a bise wind. It was sunny in the south, Engadine and generally in the high Alpine regions. In the other regions it was cloudy, with prolonged bright spells in the far west and in Valais and Grisons. In the north and east in particular, a little snow fell even at low altitudes.

Fresh snow
5 to 10 cm in the eastern part of the northern flank of the Alps and northern Grisons, a few flakes over a wide area elsewhere

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

Wind
- Light to moderate from the north to northeast
- In the western Prealps and the Jura, a moderate bise wind, strengthening in the afternoon
- In the south, a moderate foehn wind

Weather forecast through Wednesday, 21.03.2018

There will be cold winter temperatures with a sometimes strong bise wind. On the northern flank of the Alps and in northern and central Grisons, it will be cloudy at first and a little snow will fall, even at low altitudes. As the day progresses it will become partly sunny in the western part of the northern flank of the Alps and in northern and central Grisons; in the afternoon there will be bright spells in central and eastern parts of the northern flank of the Alps. In Valais and the south it will be mostly sunny.

Fresh snow
Central and eastern parts of the northern flank of the Alps: a few centimetres

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m: between a cold -11 °C in the north and -9 °C in the south

Wind
- In the west and generally at elevated altitudes, occasionally strong from the northeast
- In the south, a strong foehn wind during the night, easing a little during the day

Avalanche bulletin for Wednesday, 21 March 2018

Outlook through Friday, 23.03.2018

Thursday

After a clear night it will be mostly sunny. In the afternoon dense high-altitude cloud will build up from the north. The wind will veer north to northwesterly and remain moderate to strong at elevated altitudes. The danger of dry avalanches will decrease, but only very slowly in Valais and Grisons because of the weak layers in the old snowpack.

Friday

On Thursday night a little snow will fall in the north. On Friday, as the day progresses it will become quite sunny in the west and in particular in Valais. In the northeast there will be only weak bright spells. The south will be sunny and milder. In the north the danger of dry avalanches will not change significantly. In the south the danger of dry avalanches will decrease, but on sunny slopes an increase in moist avalanche activity is to be expected.