Avalanche bulletin for Friday, 4 January 2019

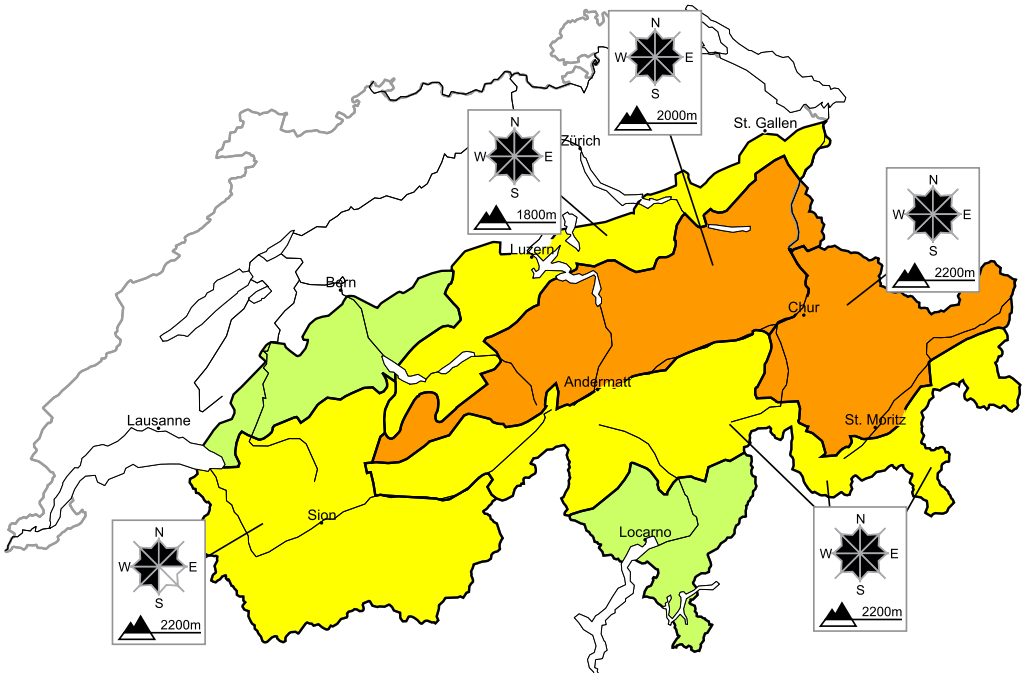
4.1.2019, 07:39

In the north and in the east a considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area

Edition: 4.1.2019, 08:00 / Next update: 4.1.2019, 17:00

Avalanche danger

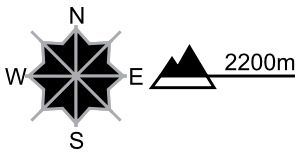
updated on 4.1.2019, 08:00



region A — Level 3, considerable

Wind slabs, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and a strong to storm force northerly wind, sometimes large wind slabs formed in the last two days. They are prone to triggering. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches.
Isolated avalanche prone weak layers exist deeper in the old snowpack. These avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep, rather lightly snow-covered shady slopes above approximately 2400 m. In particular here avalanches can be triggered in the old snow and reach large size in some cases.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

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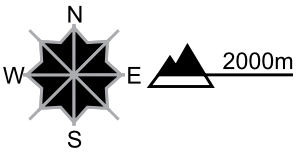
region B — Level 3, considerable

Wind slabs

Avalanche prone locations



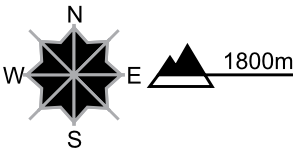
Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and a strong to storm force northerly wind, sometimes large wind slabs formed in the last two days. They are prone to triggering. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches. These can reach large size in isolated cases.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

region C — Level 2, moderate

Wind slabs

Avalanche prone locations



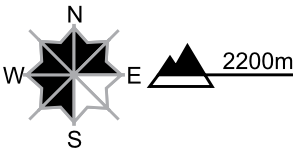
Danger description

The wind slabs of the last two days represent the main danger. They are rather small but can in some cases be released easily. The avalanche prone locations are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. They will increase with altitude.
Careful route selection is important.

region D — Level 2, moderate

Wind slabs, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh and somewhat older wind slabs are mostly small. They are to be found adjacent to ridgelines in all aspects. The prevalence of avalanche prone locations will increase with altitude.
Valais: Avalanches can in isolated cases be released in the old snowpack and reach dangerously large size, especially on very steep north facing slopes above approximately 2400 m.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for defensive route selection.

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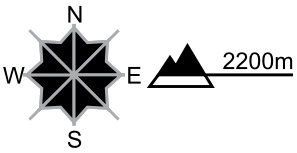
region E — Level 2, moderate

Wind slabs, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh and somewhat older wind slabs represent the main danger. They are mostly only small but can in some cases be released easily. The prevalence of avalanche prone locations will increase with altitude. The wind slabs are to be evaluated with care and prudence in particular in very steep terrain.
Grisons: Avalanches can in isolated cases be released in the old snowpack and reach dangerously large size, especially on very steep north facing slopes above approximately 2400 m. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for defensive route selection.

region F — Level 1, low

Individual avalanche prone locations are to be found in particular on extremely steep slopes. Fresh wind slabs are to be evaluated with care and prudence. Even a small snow slide can sweep snow sport participants along and give rise to falls.
Below approximately 2200 m: In steep terrain there is a danger of falling on the hard crust.

region G — Level 1, low

Individual avalanche prone locations are to be found in particular on extremely steep slopes. Even a small snow slide can sweep snow sport participants along and give rise to falls.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 3.1.2019, 17:00

Snowpack

The snowdrift accumulations which have been generated during the last two days are still prone to triggering. In the major areas of precipitation of the central and eastern sectors of the northern flank of the Alps and in the northern part of Grisons, these drifted masses are medium-to-large sized. In the remaining regions of Switzerland they are relatively small-sized. In spite of the strong to storm-strength northerly winds, only small-sized snowdrift accumulations are still being freshly generated.
In addition, in the southern Valais and in Grisons more than anywhere else, in the middle and lower sections of the snow cover, there are weakened layers which are still prone to triggering. These avalanche prone locations are located primarily on very steep north-facing slopes above 2400 m. In the remaining regions of Switzerland these weak layers are generally well covered or less threatening. Below approximately 2200 m, the more deeply embedded layers inside the snowpack are well consolidated for the most part.
Below 1500 m there is only a small amount of snow on the ground; in the Jura region there is hardly any snow in outlying terrain away from secured and marked ski runs.

Observed weather on Thursday, 03.01.2019

On Wednesday night the snowfall came to an end, including in eastern regions down to low lying areas. During the daytime on Thursday in eastern regions, skies were partially overcast, in the other regions of Switzerland it was sunny.

Fresh snow
Starting on Tuesday night and until Thursday morning, the following amounts of fresh snow were registered above approximately 1500 m:
- Northern flank of the Alps from the eastern part of the Bernese Oberland as far as Liechtenstein, northern Tavetsch, northern Grisons: 20 to 30 cm; in the Glarner Alps and in the Prättigau as much as 50 cm;
- Obergoms, remaining parts of central Grisons, Upper Engadine north of the Inn, Lower Engadine: 10 to 20 cm;
- remaining regions of Switzerland: only a few centimetres over widespread areas; in the southern Valais, in central Ticino and in Sotto Ceneri there was no snow.

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m, between -14 °C in eastern regions and -8 °C in western and in southern regions.

Wind
- Winds at high altitudes and in general in the southern regions were blowing at strong velocity, also at storm strength intermittently, from northerly directions;
- in the western sector of the northern flank of the Alps, a moderate-strength bise wind was blowing.

Weather forecast through Friday, 04.01.2019

In the eastern regions, skies will be overcast for the most part. Intermittently a small amount of snowfall is anticipated down to low lying areas. In the western regions it will be predominantly sunny. During the course of the day, the cloud cover is expected to increase there as well. In the southern Valais, in central Ticino and in Sotto Ceneri, it will be sunny by and large.

Fresh snow
Between Thursday afternoon and Friday afternoon in the eastern sector of the northern flank of the Alps, in northern and central Grisons, as well as in the Engadine north of the Inn, approximately 5 cm of fresh snow is anticipated.

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m, between -10 °C in eastern regions and -6 °C in western and in southern regions.

Wind
- At high altitudes and in general in the southern regions, winds will be blowing at strong to storm strength from northerly directions;
- in the western sector of the northern flank of the Alps, strong bise winds will be blowing during the night, slackening off during the daytime.

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Outlook through Sunday, 06.01.2019

On Saturday and on Sunday in northern regions and in Grisons, snowfall is anticipated over widespread areas. In the southern regions it will be partly sunny. At high altitudes and in general in the southern regions, a strong to storm-strength northerly wind will continue to blow.
Avalanche danger levels could increase somewhat from place to place in northern regions on Saturday. Continuing into Sunday, the avalanche situation is expected to remain treacherous. In the southern regions, avalanche danger levels are not expected to change significantly.