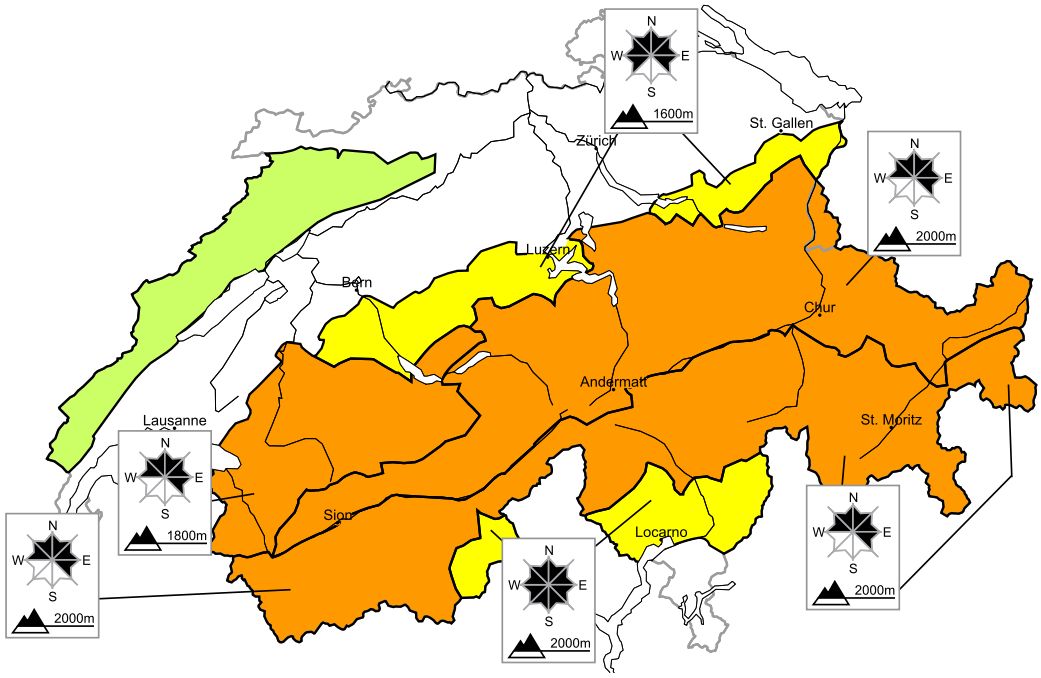
Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area

Edition: 17.1.2019, 08:00 / Next update: 17.1.2019, 17:00

Avalanche danger

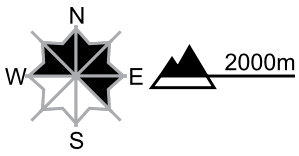
updated on 17.1.2019, 08:00



region A — Level 3, considerable

Old snow, wind slabs

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Avalanches can in some cases be triggered in the old snowpack and reach dangerously large size. Caution is to be exercised in particular in areas where the snow cover is rather shallow. These avalanche prone locations are barely recognisable, even to the trained eye.
Fresh wind slabs are to be found especially at elevated altitudes. These are in some cases prone to triggering.

Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger. Defensive route selection is recommended.

Gliding avalanches

In particular on very steep sunny slopes gliding avalanches are to be expected below approximately 2200 m. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks.

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

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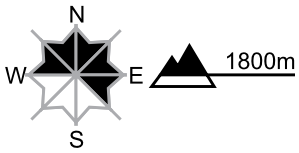
region B — Level 3, considerable

Old snow, wind slabs

Avalanche prone locations



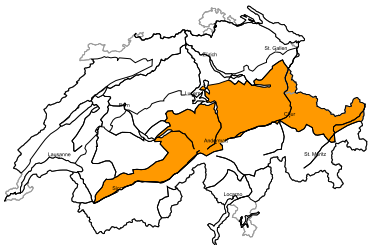
Danger description

Avalanches can in some cases be triggered in the old snowpack and reach dangerously large size. Caution is to be exercised in particular in areas where the snow cover is rather shallow. These avalanche prone locations are barely recognisable, even to the trained eye.
Fresh wind slabs are to be found in particular adjacent to ridgelines and in gullies and bowls. They are mostly small but can be released easily.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger. Defensive route selection is recommended.

Gliding avalanches

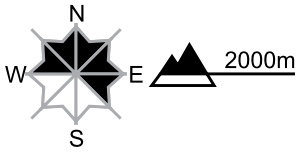
In particular on very steep sunny slopes medium-sized and, in isolated cases, large gliding avalanches are to be expected below approximately 2200 m. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks.

region C — Level 3, considerable



Fresh snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches. These can in particular be triggered in near-surface layers and reach dangerously large size. The avalanche prone locations are barely recognisable, even to the trained eye.
Fresh wind slabs are to be found especially at elevated altitudes. They are mostly small but in some cases prone to triggering.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger. Defensive route selection is recommended.

Gliding avalanches

In particular on very steep sunny slopes large gliding avalanches are to be expected below approximately 2400 m. Exposed transportation routes can be endangered. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided as far as possible.

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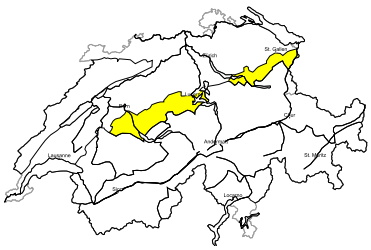
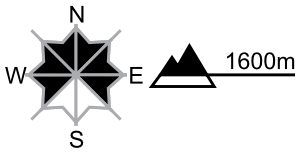
region D — Level 2, moderate



Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow of the last few days is in individual cases still prone to triggering. These avalanche prone locations are rare but are barely recognisable. Caution is to be exercised in particular in areas where the snow cover is rather shallow as well as at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack, when entering gullies and bowls for example. Defensive route selection is appropriate.
As a consequence of westerly wind, wind slabs will form in particular in the vicinity of peaks. These are mostly small but can be released easily. They are to be avoided in steep terrain.

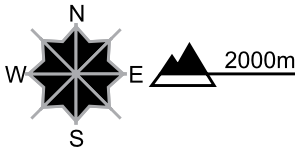
Gliding avalanches

In particular on very steep sunny slopes medium-sized and, in isolated cases, large gliding avalanches are to be expected. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided as far as possible.

region E — Level 2, moderate

Wind slabs

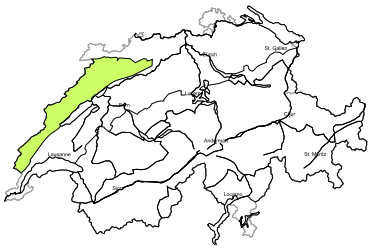
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Fresh and somewhat older wind slabs are in some cases prone to triggering. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in particular in very steep terrain. Apart from the danger of being buried, restraint should be exercised as well in view of the danger of avalanches sweeping people along and giving rise to falls. At elevated altitudes avalanche prone locations are more widespread and the danger is slightly greater.

region F — Level 1, low



Fresh and somewhat older wind slabs are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in particular in extremely steep terrain. Apart from the danger of being buried, restraint should be exercised in particular in view of the danger of avalanches sweeping people along and giving rise to falls.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 16.1.2019, 17:00

Snowpack

The thick layers of fresh snow from the beginning of the week are consolidating increasingly. Particularly on shady slopes, they are still prone to triggering in some places. In Goms and from the eastern part of the Bernese Oberland over the central and eastern sectors of the northern flank of the Alps as far as northern Grisons and into the northern part of Lower Engadine, the layers of fresh fallen snow are so thick that persons can hardly still trigger avalanches in the old snowpack. In the remaining regions, except in the furthermost south, the more deeply embedded weak layers need to be evaluated with great caution. Especially treacherous are the places where the snow is shallow.
At high altitude as a result of the westerly winds, predominantly small-sized snowdrift accumulations have been generated during the last two days which are expected to grow further on Thursday.
Below approximately 2200 m, gliding snow is active and glide-snow avalanches can be expected, especially on sunny slopes. Glide cracks on the snowpack surface have been observed as high up as 2500 m. In the regions where snowfall has been heaviest on the northern flank of the Alps and in northern Grisons, glide-snow avalanches can become very large in some places.

Observed weather on Wednesday, 16.01.2019

It was sunny, accompanied intermittently by high altitude cloudbanks.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, between +4 °C in western regions; and +2 °C in eastern regions; and -2 °C in southern regions

Wind

Winds were blowing at light to moderate strength from westerly to southwesterly directions, intensifying during the afternoon in northern regions and in general at high altitudes.

Weather forecast through Thursday, 17.01.2019

In the Jura and the southern regions, nocturnal skies will frequently be overcast, in the other regions skies will be clear. During the morning in northern and eastern regions, skies will initially be bright as a result of foehn influence, in the furthermost eastern regions it will even be quite sunny. During the course of the day, clouds will move in from the west and light snowfall will set in. In the southern regions skies will be overcast and local showers are anticipated. The snowfall level will descend from 1000 m down to approximately 700 m.

Fresh snow

Above approximately 1200 m, the following amounts of fresh snow are expected:
· Jura; western sector of the northern flank of the Alps, Lower Valais, northern Upper Valais: 5 to 10 cm;
· remaining sectors of the northern flank of the Alps, Sotto Ceneri: maximum 5 cm.

Temperature

The midday temperature at 2000 m will descend to -5 °C in western and southern regions, and to -2 °C in eastern regions.

Wind

· Winds will be blowing at moderate strength, at strong velocity in the Jura, in western and in high alpine regions, from the southwest;
· south of the Main Alpine Ridge, winds will be predominantly light from the south.

Outlook through Saturday, 19.01.2019

On Thursday night in northern regions, about 10 cm of fresh snow is expected above approximately 1000 m. During the course of the day it will become predominantly sunny from the west. On Saturday, skies will turn heavily overcast to an increasing degree from the southwest. In the southern regions a small amount of snowfall is possible; in the northern regions it will remain dry. The avalanche danger is not expected to change significantly on Friday, and stems largely from the snowdrift accumulations and gliding snow masses. On Saturday, the avalanche danger levels will decrease somewhat.