Avalanche bulletin for Friday, 27 December 2019

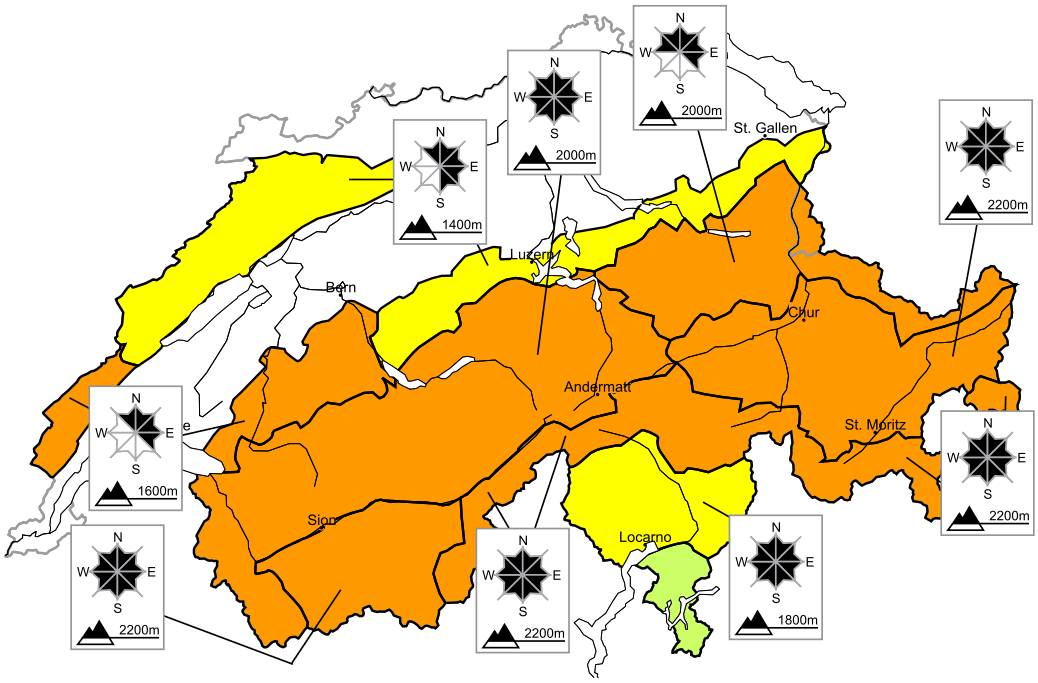
27.12.2019, 07:38

Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area

Edition: 27.12.2019, 08:00 / Next update: 27.12.2019, 17:00

Avalanche danger

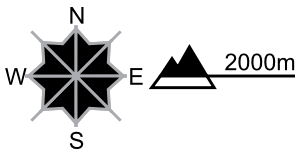
updated on 27.12.2019, 08:00



region A | **Level 3, considerable**

New snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and a moderate to strong wind, wind slabs will form.
Avalanches can be released, even by a single winter sport participant. In addition individual small and medium-sized natural avalanches are possible.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Gliding avalanches

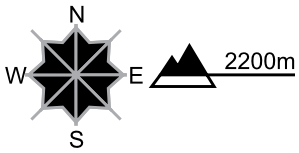
Below approximately 2400 m medium-sized and, in isolated cases, large gliding avalanches are possible. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided as far as possible.

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

region B — Level 3, considerable

Wind slabs, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Easily released wind slabs will form. Additionally in some places avalanches can also be triggered in the old snowpack and reach dangerously large size. These avalanche prone locations are to be found especially at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack above approximately 2400 m. These avalanche prone locations are rare and are barely recognisable, even to the trained eye. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and careful route selection.

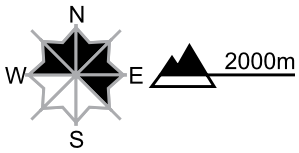
Gliding avalanches

Below approximately 2400 m medium-sized and, in isolated cases, large gliding avalanches are possible. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided as far as possible.

region C — Level 3, considerable

Wind slabs

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Fresh and somewhat older wind slabs represent the main danger. Avalanches can in some places be released, even by a single winter sport participant and reach medium size.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

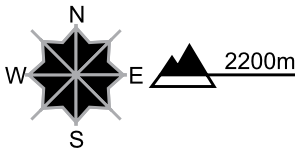
Gliding avalanches

Below approximately 2200 m medium-sized gliding avalanches are possible. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided as far as possible.

region D — Level 3, considerable

Wind slabs

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Fresh and somewhat older wind slabs represent the main danger. They are to be bypassed especially in very steep terrain. Avalanches can in some places be released by a single winter sport participant and reach medium size.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and careful route selection.

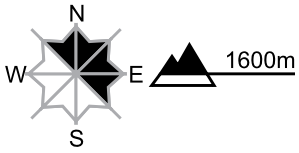
Gliding avalanches

Below approximately 2200 m medium-sized gliding avalanches are possible. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided as far as possible.

region E — Level 3, considerable

Wind slabs

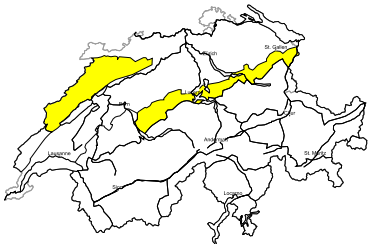
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

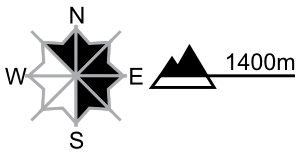
As a consequence of fresh snow and a strong westerly wind, avalanche prone wind slabs formed. Avalanches can be released, even by a single winter sport participant, but they will be small in most cases. Wind slabs in very steep terrain are to be bypassed as far as possible.

region F — Level 2, moderate



Wind slabs

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and a moderate wind, mostly small wind slabs will form. These are to be evaluated with care and prudence. The number and size of avalanche prone locations will increase with altitude.

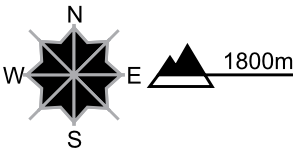
Backcountry touring and snowshoe hiking call for careful route selection.

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

region G — Level 2, moderate

Wind slabs

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The somewhat older wind slabs are in some cases prone to triggering at elevated altitudes. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence. The number and size of avalanche prone locations will increase with altitude.

Backcountry touring and snowshoe hiking call for careful route selection.

region H — Level 1, low

No distinct avalanche problem

Individual avalanche prone locations are to be found in extremely steep terrain. Even a snow slide can sweep snow sport participants along and give rise to falls. 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 26.12.2019, 17:00

Snowpack

As a result of fresh fallen snow and, in some places, strong-velocity winds, snowdrift accumulations which are easily triggered are forming on the northern flank of the Alps and in the Valais more than anywhere else. In addition, the near-to-surface layers are still prone to triggering in some places. More deeply embedded inside the snowpack there are expansively metamorphosed (faceted) snow-crystal layers evident. This is particularly the case in the inneralpine regions of the Valais and Grisons. In southern Valais and Grisons, several large-sized avalanches have been registered which triggered from these layers. These avalanche fractures released at above 2600 m in all aspects.
On the southern flank of the Alps and in the furthermost western regions of the Lower Valais, the snowpack structuring is favourable. Fractures at deep levels of the snow cover are to be expected only rarely.
In all regions of Switzerland below approximately 2400 m, gliding avalanches are possible. These releases can in isolated cases grow to large size.

Observed weather on Thursday, 26.12.2019

In the eastern regions there was a small amount of snowfall registered on Wednesday evening. In the other regions of Switzerland, nighttime skies were clear and it was sunny everywhere on Thursday morning. During the course of the day, cloud cover moved in from the west. In the eastern regions it remained quite sunny until well into the afternoon.

Fresh snow
Eastern sector of the northern flank of the Alps, northern Grisons, northern Lower Engadine: 5 to 10 cm; in the other regions of Switzerland, less; or else, it remained dry.

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m, between +3 °C in the western regions and 0 °C in the eastern regions.

Wind
Winds were initially blowing at strong velocity from the northwest during the nocturnal hours, during the daytime blowing at predominantly moderate strength from westerly directions at high altitudes.

Weather forecast through Friday, 27.12.2019

Snowfall is expected to set in on Thursday night in the northern and western regions. During the daytime on Friday, widespread snowfall is anticipated, which will be intermittently intensive in the western part of the Jura, in the western and central sectors of the northern flank of the Alps and in the Valais. The snowfall level will lie at approximately 1000 m. In central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri it will remain dry and be quite sunny.

Fresh snow
By Friday afternoon above 1400 m:
- western part of the Jura, western and central sectors of the northern flank of the Alps, Lower Valais, northern Upper Valais: 20 to 40 cm; Bernese Alps as much as 50 cm from place to place;
- eastern part of the Jura, eastern sector of the northern flank of the Alps, southern Upper Valais: 10 to 25 cm;
- northern and central Grisons, Engadine, Bedretto: 5 to 15 cm;
- further to the south, less; or else, it will remain dry.

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m in northern regions, -3 °C; and in southern regions, -1 °C.

Wind
- in the Prealps and Jura region: moderate to strong-velocity southwesterly winds;
- in the Alps: winds will be westerly to northerly, blowing predominantly at moderate strength, at high altitudes intermittently at strong velocity.

Avalanche bulletin for Friday, 27 December 2019

Outlook through Sunday, 29.12.2019

Following the dispersal of the residual clouds, it is expected to be predominantly sunny in the mountains on both days. Temperatures will rise measurably. On Sunday, the zero-degree level in the western regions will lie at 3000 m, in the eastern regions at 2500 m.
The danger of dry-snow avalanches is expected to incrementally decrease. The old-snow problem still requires caution in the inneralpine regions of the Valais and Grisons. The danger of gliding avalanches will remain upright. Gliding avalanches can grow to large size in isolated cases.