Avalanche bulletin for Friday, 14 February 2020

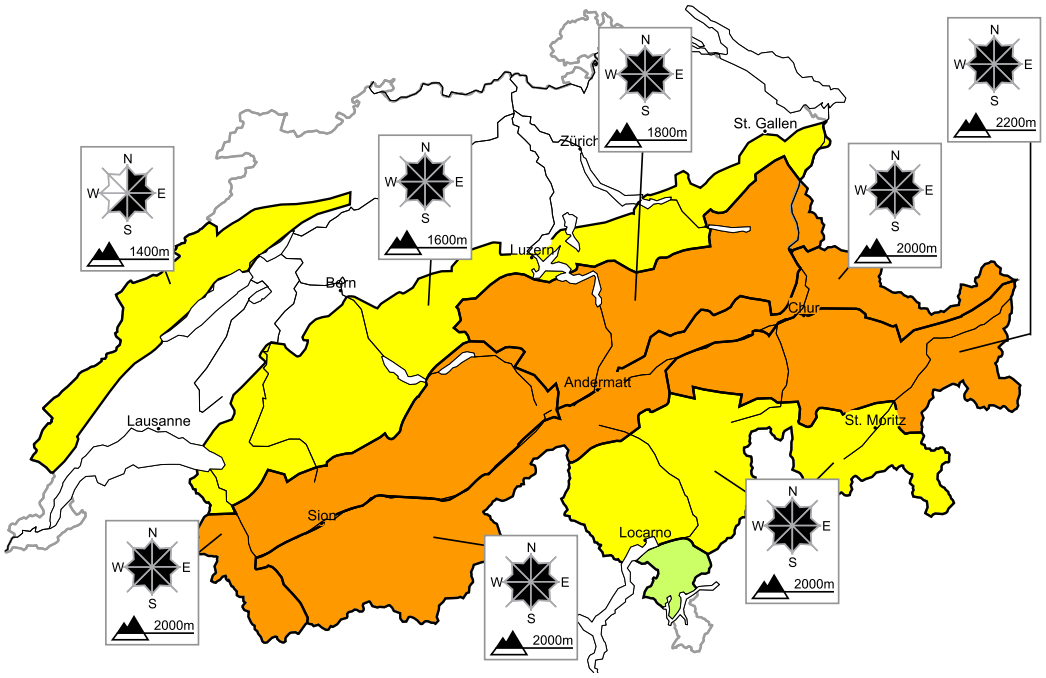
14.2.2020, 07:51

As a consequence of fresh snow and stormy weather a considerable avalanche danger will be encountered in some regions

Edition: 14.2.2020, 08:00 / Next update: 14.2.2020, 17:00

Avalanche danger

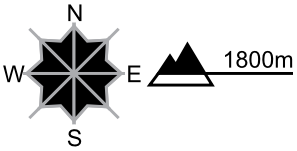
updated on 14.2.2020, 08:00



region A — Level 3, considerable

New snow

Avalanche prone locations



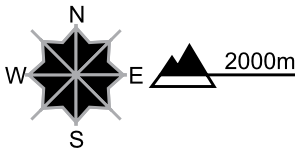
Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and a strong to storm force westerly wind, sometimes large wind slabs will form in particular in areas not adjacent to ridgelines. The fresh snow and wind slabs are prone to triggering. Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches, including large ones. Natural avalanches are possible. Backcountry touring calls for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and restraint.

region B — Level 3, considerable

New snow

Avalanche prone locations



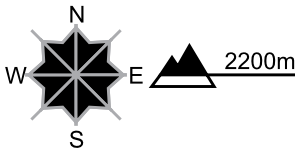
Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and a strong to storm force westerly wind, sometimes large wind slabs will form in particular in areas not adjacent to ridgelines. The fresh snow and wind slabs are prone to triggering. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches, including large ones. Backcountry touring calls for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

region C — Level 3, considerable

Wind slabs, old snow

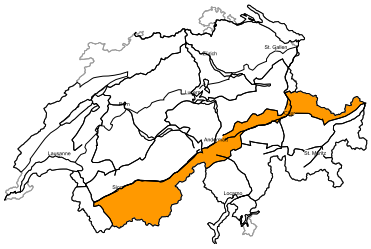
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

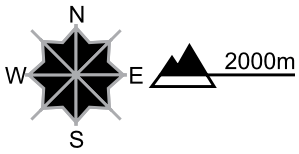
The fresh and older wind slabs are prone to triggering. They can be released by a single winter sport participant. Mostly the avalanches are medium-sized.
Additionally in some places avalanches can also be triggered in the old snowpack and reach large size. These avalanche prone locations are rather rare but are difficult to recognise. Isolated whumpfing sounds can indicate the danger.
Off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

region D — Level 3, considerable



Wind slabs

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and a strong to storm force westerly wind, sometimes easily released wind slabs will form in particular in areas not adjacent to ridgelines. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches. The avalanches can in some cases reach dangerously large size. Backcountry touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

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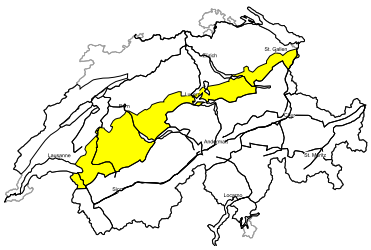
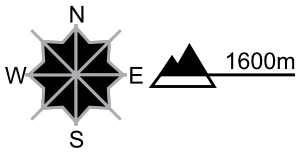
region E — Level 2, moderate



Wind slabs

Avalanche prone locations



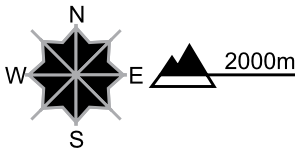
Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and a strong to storm force westerly wind, wind slabs will form. They are mostly small but in some cases prone to triggering. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain. Avalanches can be released by people and reach medium size. Backcountry touring and snowshoe hiking call for careful route selection.

region F — Level 2, moderate

Wind slabs

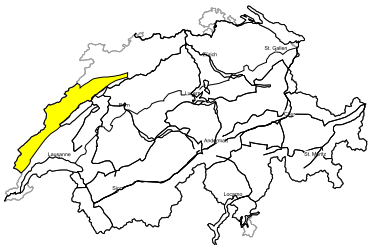
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

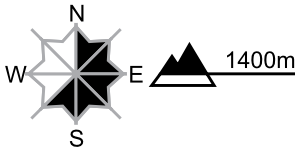
As a consequence of a strong wind, rather small wind slabs will form. The fresh and somewhat older wind slabs are in some cases prone to triggering. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in particular in very steep terrain. Backcountry touring calls for careful route selection.

region G — Level 2, moderate



Wind slabs

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and a strong to storm force westerly wind, rather small wind slabs will form. They are to be found in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. 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 in particular in view of the danger of avalanches sweeping people along and giving rise to falls. Ski touring and snowshoe hiking call for meticulous route selection.

region H — Level 1, low

Wind slabs

The small wind slabs are in some cases prone to triggering. These are to be evaluated with care and prudence in particular 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 13.2.2020, 17:00

Snowpack

The older snowdrift accumulations, which were generated during the storm-wind phase conditions at the beginning of the week, have stabilized well for the most part. As a result of renewed strong-velocity winds from westerly directions, fresh snowdrift accumulations are being generated once again. With the addition of fresh snow, particularly on the northern Alpine Ridge, these are becoming larger and are prone to triggering in some places.
Particularly in the western and central sectors of the northern flank of the Alps there is significantly less snow than is customary at this juncture of the season. The snowpack is massively affected by wind-impact and several phases of warmth. On the southern flank of the Alps, snow depths above approximately 2000 m are frequently somewhat above average and the snowpack is generally favourably structured.
More deeply embedded inside the snowpack, more than anywhere else in the inneralpine regions of Grisons and, to some extrent, also in the Valais, there are weak layers evident. These are snow-covered expansively metamorphosed (faceted) surfaces for the most part which were formed over the extended period of fine weather in January. Inside these layers, avalanche fractures and releases are still possible.

Observed weather on Thursday, 13.02.2020

Following a night of partially clear skies, cloud cover became denser starting in the west and precipitation set in. In the inneralpine regions of Grisons and in the southern regions, it remained dry until late afternoon.

Fresh snow
Until the afternoon hours, there was only a small amount of fresh snow in the western regions.

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

Wind
Winds were westerly to southwesterly,
· increasing in intensity, blowing at moderate to strong velocity at high altitudes at midday;
· in the other regions of Switzerland blowing at light to moderate strength.

Weather forecast through Friday, 14.02.2020

On Thursday night, skies will be overcast and snowfall falling down to approximately 900 m is anticipated over widespread areas. During the morning the precipitation will come to an end and bright intervals are anticipated to set in from the west. On the southern flank of the Alps, it will become sunny as a result of northerly winds.

Fresh snow
Between Thursday afternoon and Friday midday:
· furthermost western part of Lower Valais, northern Alpine Ridge: 20 to 40 cm;
· remaining part of Lower Valais, Prättigau, Silvretta, Samnaun, Jura: 15 to 30 cm;
· in the other regions of Switzerland, less.

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m, between -4 °C in the northern regions and -2 °C in the southern regions.

Wind
Winds will be westerly to northwesterly,
· blowing at strong to storm strength, slackening off somewhat during the course of the day;
· on the southern flank of the Alps, northern foehn wind is expected to arise during the morning.

Outlook through Sunday, 16.02.2020

On Saturday it will be predominantly sunny in the mountains, only partially so on Sunday. Cloud cover is expected to increase from the west. It will be unusually mild, with the zero-degree level at 3000 m. The danger of dry-snow avalanches is not expected to change significanatly on Saturday, and subsequently will decrease. As a result of the significantly higher temperatures, moist-snow slides and avalanches can be expected.