Avalanche bulletin for Thursday, 20 February 2020

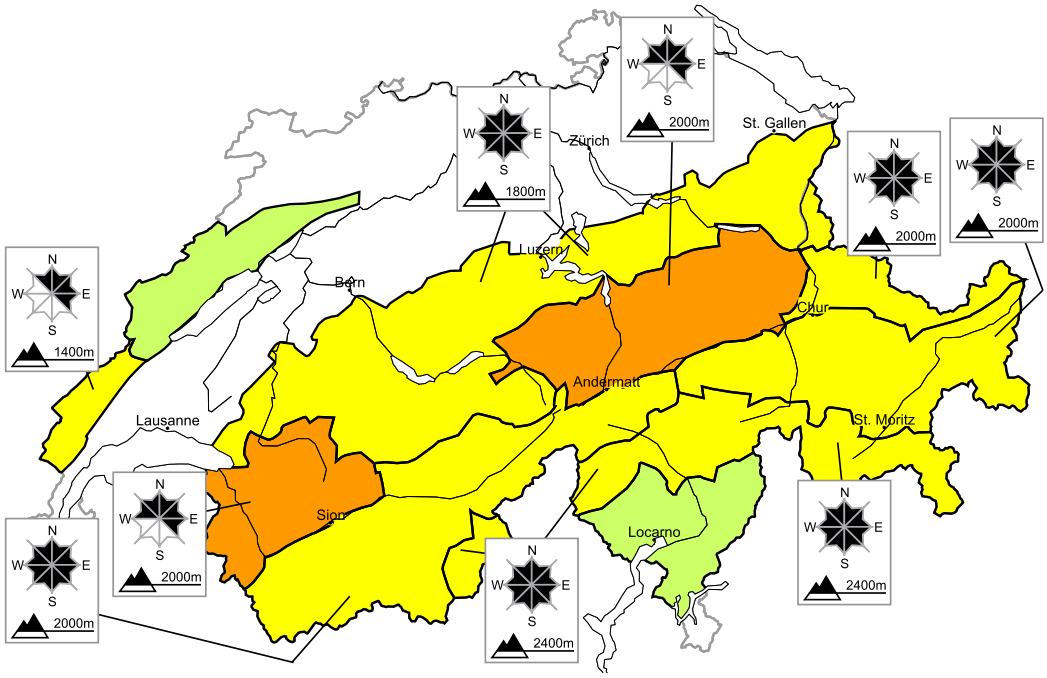
20.2.2020, 07:38

Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered in some regions. Wind slabs require caution

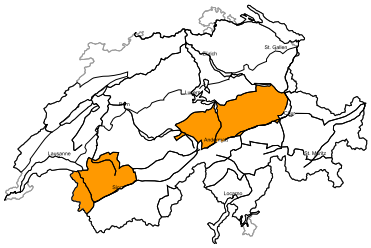
Edition: 20.2.2020, 08:00 / Next update: 20.2.2020, 17:00

Avalanche danger

updated on 20.2.2020, 08:00

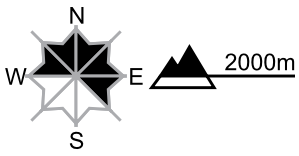


region A — Level 3, considerable



Wind slabs

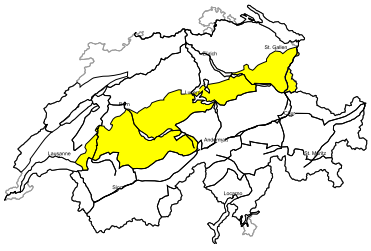
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

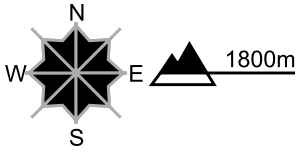
As a consequence of new snow and wind from westerly directions, avalanche prone wind slabs formed. Avalanches can be released by a single winter sport participant and reach medium size. Backcountry touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and careful route selection.

region B — Level 2, moderate



Wind slabs

Avalanche prone locations



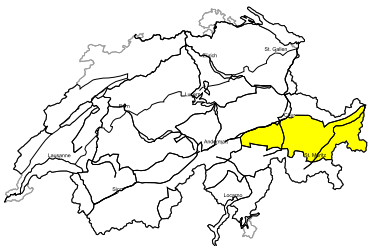
Danger description

As a consequence of new snow and wind from westerly directions, avalanche prone wind slabs formed. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain. Avalanches can in some places be released by a single winter sport participant, but they will be small in most cases. Careful route selection is important.

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

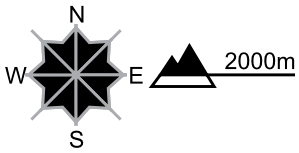
WSL Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research SLF
www.slf.ch

region C — Level 2, moderate



Wind slabs, old snow

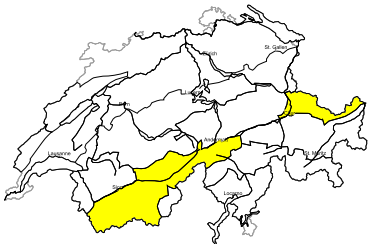
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

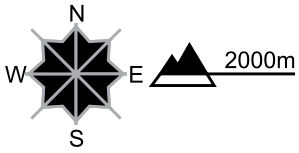
As a consequence of a strong northwesterly wind, avalanche prone wind slabs formed. Avalanches can in some places be released by a single winter sport participant, but they will be small in most cases. Avalanches can in isolated cases be released in the weakly bonded old snow. These can in some cases reach dangerously large size. Such avalanche prone locations are rare but are difficult to recognise. Isolated whumpfing sounds can indicate the danger.
Careful route selection is important.

region D — Level 2, moderate



Wind slabs

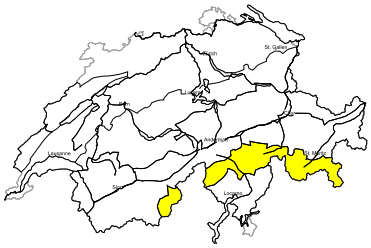
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

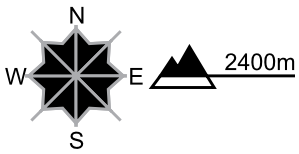
As a consequence of new snow and wind from westerly directions, avalanche prone wind slabs formed. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain. Avalanches can in some places be released by a single winter sport participant, but they will be small in most cases. Careful route selection is important.

region E — Level 2, moderate



Wind slabs

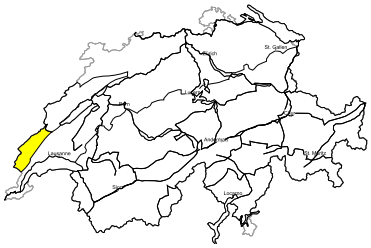
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

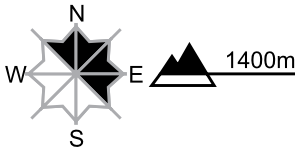
Fresh wind slabs are small but prone to triggering. They are to be found in particular adjacent to ridgelines and in gullies and bowls. The wind slabs are to be evaluated with care and prudence in very steep terrain. Apart from the danger of being buried, restraint should be exercised in particular in view of the danger of avalanches sweeping people along and giving rise to falls.

region F — Level 2, moderate



Wind slabs

Avalanche prone locations

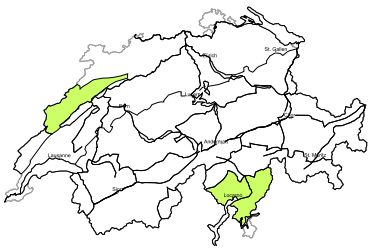


Danger description

The mostly small wind slabs of the last few days represent the main danger. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence 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.

region G

Level 1, low



No distinct avalanche problem

The more recent wind slabs are in isolated cases prone to triggering at elevated altitudes. They are small. They 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.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 19.2.2020, 17:00

Snowpack

As a result of ıntermıttently strong-velocity westerly winds, the fresh snow and to some extent also the somewhat loosely-packed old snow was transported. In the northern regions more than anywhere else, small-to-medium sized snowdrift accumulations have been generated.
More deeply embedded inside the snow cover, particularly in the inneralpine regions of Grisons and to some extent of the Valais, there are weak layers evident, particularly above approximately 2400 m. These are for the most part layers of snow-blanketed, expansively metamorphosed (faceted) crystals which formed during the extended period of fine weather in January; or else, higher up in the snowpack structure, weak layers in the vicinity of crusts. As stability tests and avalanches have demonstrated, avalanche releases are possible from these layers.
At lower altitudes there is hardly any snow on the ground, apart from the last round of fresh snow. At intermediate altitudes the snow depths are highly varied, particularly in the western and central sectors of the northern flank of the Alps; in the other regions of Switzerland, snow depths are average. Above 2000 m in the northern regions there is somewhat less snow than is usual for this juncture of the season; in the Valais and Grisons the snow depths are average over widespread areas; in the southern regions they are above average.

Observed weather on Wednesday, 19.02.2020

On Wednesday in the northern regions and the Valais, skies were heavily overcast. As of the early morning hours there was snowfall over widespread areas. In the Engadine, skies were bright to start with, subsequently during the course of the day the cloud cover increased and snowfall set in. The snowfall level lay at approximately 800 m. South of the Main Alpine Ridge it was partly sunny.

Fresh snow

Between Wednesday morning and Wednesday afternoon, the following amounts of fresh snow were registered above approximately 1200 m:

- western part of Jura region, Vaud Alps, northern Lower Valais and a strip of land from Schächental over the Glarner and St. Gallen Alps into the regions of Arosa and Davos: 15 to 30 cm;
- eastern part of Jura region, remaining parts of the northern flank of the Alps, southern Lower Valais, Upper Valais, remaining parts of northern Grisons, Lower Engadine: 5 to 15 cm;
- in the other regions of Switzerland: only a few centimetres; in the southern regions it remained dry.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, -5 °C.

Wind

- Winds in the northern regions were blowing at moderate to strong velocidty, during the daytime at storm strength in some places, elsewhere at light to moderate strength, from westerly directions;
- in the southern regions, blowing at moderate strength from northerly directions in the afternoon.

Avalanche bulletin for Thursday, 20 February 2020

20.2.2020, 07:38

Weather forecast through Thursday, 20.02.2020

On Wednesday night, the snowfall will come to an end in the northern and the eastern regions. During the daytime in the eastern regions, it will become sunny after residual clouds have dispersed. In the other regions of Switzerland it will be predominantly sunny.

Fresh snow
Above approximately 1000 m: in the northern regions, a few centimetres of snowfall is anticipated over widespread areas; from the eastern Bernese Alps to the Glarner Alps as much as 10 cm of fresh snow from place to place.

Temperature
Temperatures will rise: at midday at 2000 m, to between +2 °C in the western regions and -2 °C in the eastern regions.

Wind
- During the night at high altitudes and in the southern regions, winds will initially be blowing at moderate to strong velocity, otherwise at light to moderate strength, from northwesterly directions;
- during the daytime, predominantly at light to moderate strength, shifting to southwesterly and intensifying during the course of the day in the northern regions.

Outlook through Saturday, 22.02.2020

On Thursday night in the northern regions, a few centimetres of fresh snow is anticipated above approximately 1000 m. During the daytime in the northern regions, it will become increasingly sunny, in the Valais and in the southern regions it will be predominantly so. On Saturday it will be generally sunny, with some cloudbanks. The zero-degree level will ascend on Saturday to 3000 m.
The danger of dry-snow avalanches is expected to incrementally decrease. During the course of the day, moist slides can be expected to release from the fresh snow as a result of solar radiation and daytime warming.