# Dry-snow avalanches in high alpine regions, wet-snow avalanches during course of day

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## Avalanche danger

### Dry-snow avalanches

The danger of dry-snow avalanches is limited to the high alpine regions. On very steep north-facing slopes more than anywhere else, avalanches can in some places be triggered by persons. Particularly on the Main Alpine Ridge and in the northern Ticino, avalanche releases can grow to large size. Skiing tours in outlying terrain require prudent route selection.

### Wet-snow avalanche during the course of the day

As a result of the heightened temperatures, the melt-freeze crust tends to soften rapidly. Below approximately 3000 m, even higher up on steep, sunny slopes, wet-snow avalanches can be expected as a result of the higher daytime temperatures and solar radiation. Gliding avalanches continue to be possible in isolated cases. On north-facing slopes which have not yet discharged more than anywhere else, these releases can grow to large size.
Backcountry tours and ascent paths to mountain refuges should be launched early and brought to an end early in the day.

## Snow and weather

### Snowpack

During the course of last week there were repeated bouts of snowfall at heightened altitudes. Most of the snowfall occurred above approximately 2800 m along the Main Alpine Ridge between Zermatt and the Bernina region and in the northern Ticino: 50 to 100 cm. In the remaining parts of the Main Alpine Ridge, in the Aletsch region and in the eastern Bernese Oberland, as well as in Grisons, there was approximately 20 to 50 cm of fresh snow registered; in the other regions of Switzerland there was less than 20 cm.
The old snowpack is thoroughly wet up to nearly 3000 m on north-facing slopes, in the other aspects it is wet even further up. In the western regions there were increasingly frequent wet-snow avalanches registered on Sunday as a result of the higher daytime temperatures, in isolated cases these were large-sized releases. In the eastern regions, these heightened temperatures are about to set in.
As a result of the heightened daytime temperatures, the snowpack surface freezes sufficiently to form a crust capable of bearing loads only above approximately 2500 m, despite the clear nocturnal skies. Subsequently, as the solar radiation intensifies during the daytime, the melt-freeze crust softens swiftly.

### Weather review to Sunday, 17 May

On Saturday night the precipitation came to an end. During the daytime on Sunday it was sunny in the western regions. In the eastern and the southern regions it was only partly sunny, accompanied by some clouds, and there were renewed rounds of precipitation during the afternoon. The snowfall level lay at 2600 to 3000 m. On Monday it was sunny over widespread areas. During the course of the day, there was convective cloud build-up, but it remained dry for the most part. Winds were blowing predominantly at light to moderate strength. The zero-degree level lay at 3200 to 3400 m.
Between Saturday evening and Monday morning, the following amounts of fresh snow were registered in the high alpine regions:

- Aletsch region and Main Alpine Ridge: 5 to 15 cm;
- remaining regions of Switzerland: only a few centimetres from place to place.

### Weather outlook through Wednesday, 20 May

On Tuesday and on Wednesday, it will be predominantly sunny and warm. During the course of each day, convective cloud build-up is anticipated and local rain showers or thunderstorms cannot be ruled out entirely. The nocturnal skies will be clear for the most part. The zero-degree level will lie at approximately 3500 m. Winds will be northeasterly, blowing at light to moderate strength.

**Avalanche bulletin through Wednesday, 20 May 2020**



## Outlook

On Ascension Day and on Friday, it will be quite sunny and ongoingly warm. During the course of each day, convective cloud build-up is anticipated and isolated showers are possible.
The avalanche situation will be favourable in the early morning hours. There are isolated avalanche prone locations for dry-snow avalanches still to be found on extremely steep north-facing slopes in the high alpine regions. During the course of each morning, the danger of wet-snow avalanches swiftly increases. Isolated gliding avalanches continue to be possible.
Skiing tours in outlying terrain need to be started very early in the morning and brought to an end early in the day.

Keep informed about the publication of unannounced Avalanche Bulletins. Activate in the App WhiteRisk the "Push Summer Bulletin". You can also subscribe to the SMS Service by sending an SMS "START SLF SOMMER" to Nr. 9234 (only Swiss cell phone providers) or unsubscribe by sending an SMS "STOP SLF SOMMER" (CHF 0.2/SMS).