Avalanche bulletin for Friday, 18 December 2020

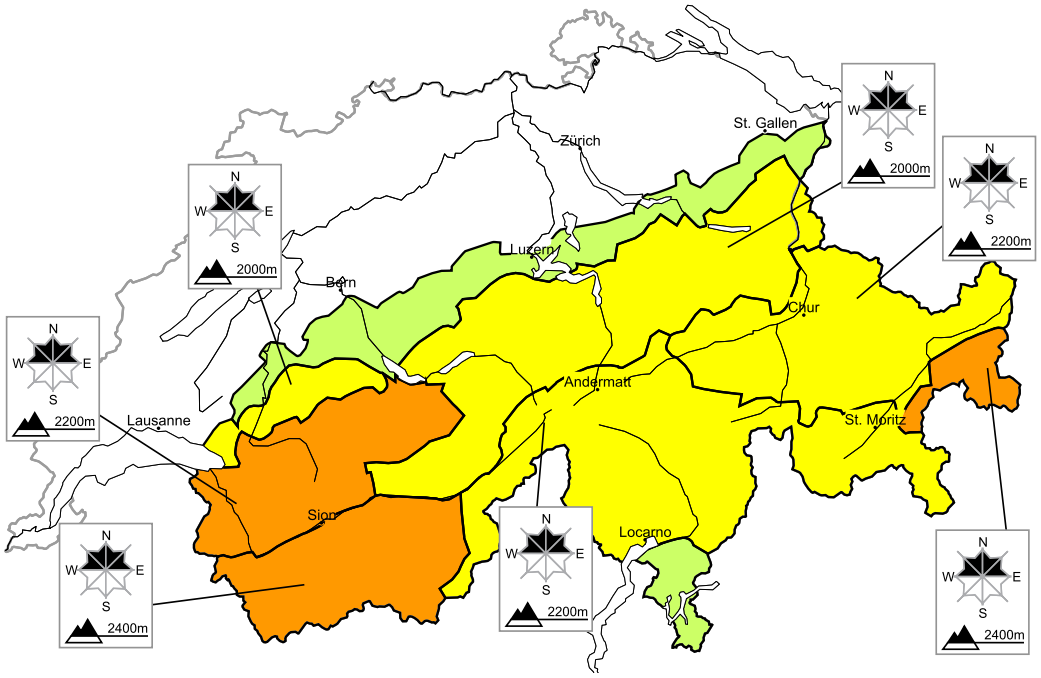
18.12.2020, 07:50

Weakly bonded old snow: Caution is to be exercised on steep north facing slopes

Edition: 18.12.2020, 08:00 / Next update: 18.12.2020, 17:00

Avalanche danger

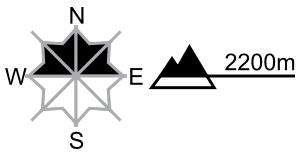
updated on 18.12.2020, 08:00



region A | **Level 3, considerable**

Old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The snowpack will be unfavourable on shady slopes. Avalanches can in some cases be released by a single winter sport participant and reach dangerously large size. The avalanche prone locations are difficult to recognise. Caution is to be exercised in particular on wind-protected shady slopes. Whumpfing sounds can indicate the danger. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.
More recent wind slabs are mostly small. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in particular in very steep terrain.

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

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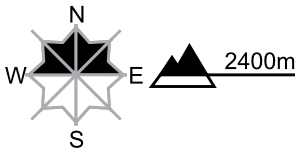
region B — Level 3, considerable

Old snow

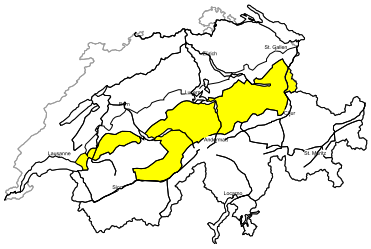
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

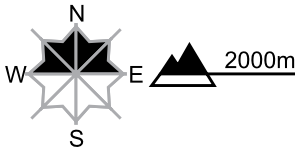
The snowpack will be unfavourable on shady slopes. Avalanches can in some cases be released by a single winter sport participant and reach dangerously large size. The avalanche prone locations are difficult to recognise. Caution is to be exercised in particular on wind-protected shady slopes at elevated altitudes. Whumpfing sounds can indicate the danger.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and careful route selection.

region C — Level 2, moderate



Old snow

Avalanche prone locations



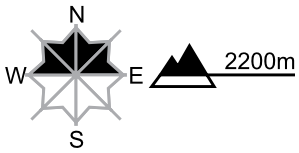
Danger description

The snowpack will be unfavourable on shady slopes. Avalanches can be triggered in deep layers and reach dangerously large size. Isolated whumpfing sounds can indicate the danger. The avalanche prone locations are rather rare but are difficult to recognise.
More recent wind slabs are mostly small. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in particular in very steep terrain.
Defensive route selection is important.

region D — Level 2, moderate

Old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The snowpack will be unfavourable on shady slopes. Avalanches can be triggered in deep layers and reach dangerously large size in particular on steep north facing slopes. The 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. Whumpfing sounds can indicate the danger.
Defensive route selection is important.

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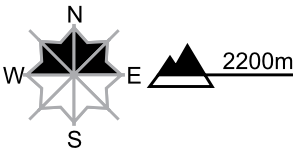
region E — Level 2, moderate

Dry avalanches: no distinct avalanche problem

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The avalanche conditions are generally favourable. Avalanches can be released in deep layers, mostly by large additional loads in isolated cases. The avalanche prone locations are barely recognisable. Caution is to be exercised in particular in areas where the snow cover is rather shallow on very steep shady slopes.
Careful route selection is recommended.

Gliding avalanches

In particular on very steep sunny slopes individual small to medium-sized gliding avalanches are possible below approximately 2200 m.

region F — Level 1, low

Wet avalanches

The snowpack will be moist. On very steep slopes wet and gliding avalanches are possible. Even a small avalanche can sweep people along and give rise to falls.

region G — Level 1, low

Dry avalanches: no distinct avalanche problem

Individual avalanche prone locations for dry avalanches are to be found in particular on extreme shady slopes at elevated altitudes. 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.

Gliding avalanches

On very steep grassy slopes gliding avalanches are possible.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 17.12.2020, 17:00

Snowpack

The snow cover on shady slopes is unfavourably layered over widespread areas. The snow from the early part of December was deposited on top of weakly consolidated layers of old-snow. Avalanches can be triggered by persons down to these more deeply embedded layers of the snowpack. In the central and eastern sectors of the northern flank of the Alps this applies to altitudes above approximately 1800 m, in the remaining regions of Switzerland above approximately 2000 to 2400 m.
In the regions of the southern flank of the Alps where snowfall has been heaviest, the weakened old snowpack layers are generally well covered and are no longer prone to triggering.
As a result of higher temperatures, the snow at intermediate altitudes has become moist.

Observed weather on Thursday, 17.12.2020

Apart from a few cloudbanks it was quite sunny. In the western regions the cloud cover increased during the course of the day.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

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

Wind

Winds were frequently light, particularly in the western and the northern regions blowing intermittently at moderate strength from westerly directions.

Weather forecast through Friday, 18.12.2020

In the early morning hours in the western regions, skies will still be partly overcast, in the other regions of Switzerland it will be predominantly sunny.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, +2 °C in the northern regions and -1 °C in the southern regions.

Wind

Winds will be light to moderate from southwesterly directions.

Outlook through Sunday, 20.12.2020

On Saturday in the northern regions, it will be predominantly sunny, subsequently cloud cover will move in from the west during the afternoon. In the southern regions, skies will frequently be overcast. On Sunday snowfall is anticipated in the western regions above approximately 1500 m, and in the southern regions above approximately 1300 m. In the eastern regions there will be foehn-induced bright intervals. An intermittently strong southwesterly wind will be blowing.
Avalanche danger levels are not expected to change significantly on Saturday. On Sunday, danger levels will increase slightly in the southern regions as a result of fresh fallen snow.