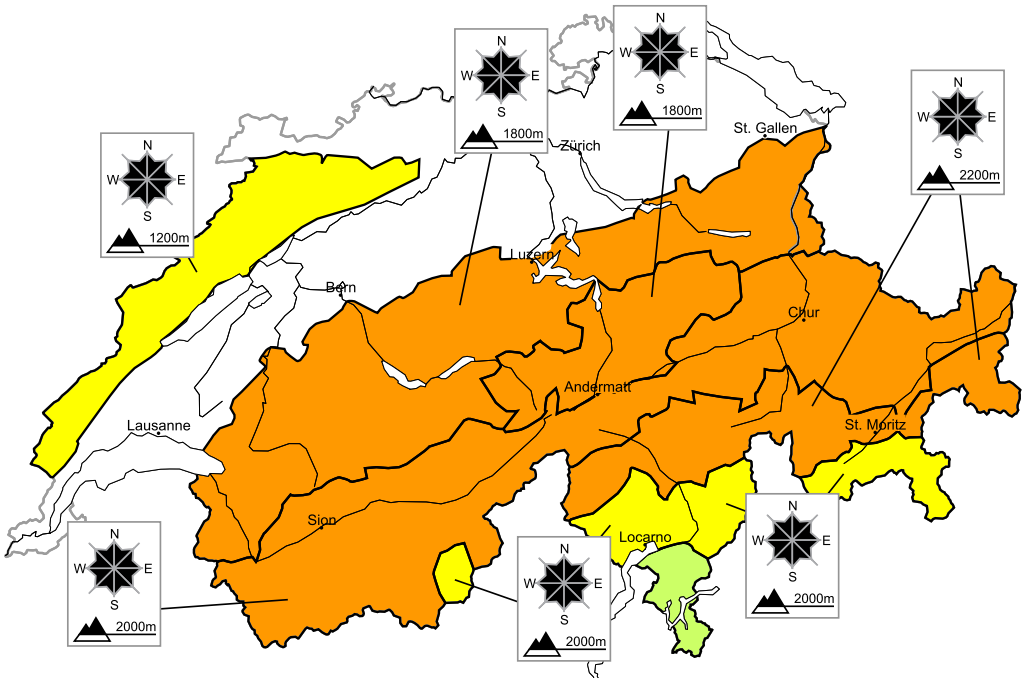
Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area

Edition: 18.3.2021, 08:00 / Next update: 18.3.2021, 17:00

Avalanche danger

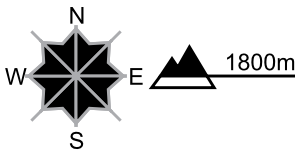
updated on 18.3.2021, 08:00



region A — Level 3, considerable

New snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

New snow and wind slabs represent the main danger. Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches, including large ones. Individual natural avalanches are further possible. From high-altitude starting zones avalanches can in isolated cases reach very large size and in isolated cases endanger transportation routes that are exposed. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and restraint.

Gliding avalanches

An increasing number of gliding avalanches are possible. This applies in particular on steep east, south and west facing slopes below approximately 2000 m.

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

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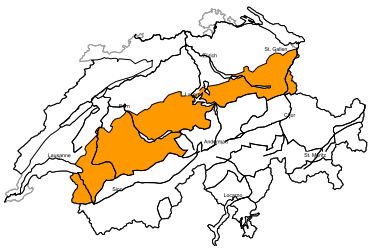
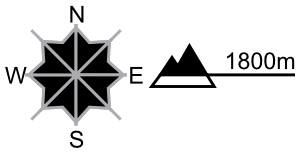
region B — Level 3, considerable



New snow

Avalanche prone locations



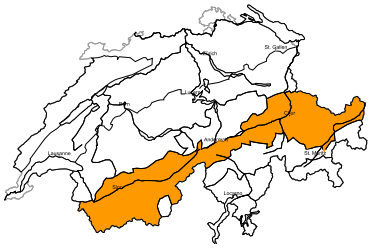
Danger description

The new snow and wind slabs are prone to triggering. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches, including dangerously large ones. Ski touring and other off-piste activities, including snowshoe hiking, call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

Gliding avalanches

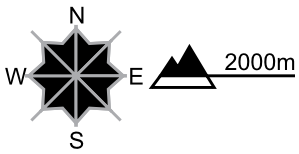
An increasing number of gliding avalanches are possible. This applies in particular on steep east, south and west facing slopes below approximately 2000 m.

region C — Level 3, considerable



New snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The new snow and wind slabs are prone to triggering. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches, including dangerously large ones. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

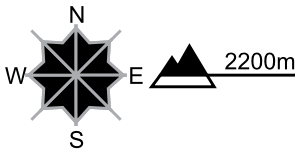
Gliding avalanches

An increasing number of gliding avalanches are possible. This applies in particular on steep east, south and west facing slopes below approximately 2000 m.

region D — Level 3, considerable

Wind slabs

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The wind slabs of the last few days can be released by a single winter sport participant. They are to be avoided in steep terrain. Mostly avalanches are medium-sized. Backcountry touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and careful route selection.

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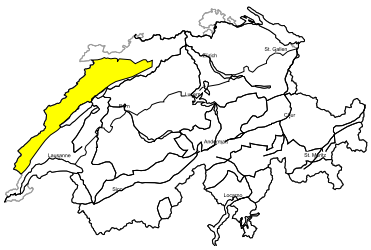
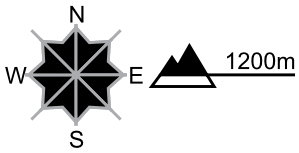
region E — Level 2, moderate



Wind slabs

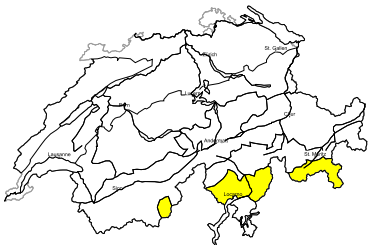
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

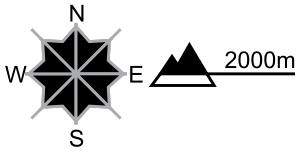
The somewhat older wind slabs can still be released in some cases. They are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. The avalanche prone locations are sometimes covered with new snow. Ski touring and snowshoe hiking call for careful route selection.

region F — Level 2, moderate



Wind slabs

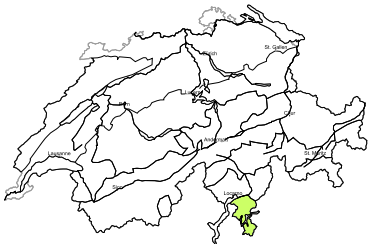
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The somewhat older wind slabs are rather small but in some cases prone to triggering. The avalanche prone locations are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Careful route selection is important. Apart from the danger of being buried, restraint should be exercised as well in view of the danger of avalanches sweeping people along and giving rise to falls.

region G — Level 1, low



No distinct avalanche problem

Individual avalanche prone locations are to be found in particular in extremely steep terrain. Even a small avalanche can sweep snow sport participants along and give rise to falls.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 17.3.2021, 17:00

Snowpack

The enormous amounts of fresh fallen snow during the last few days are gradually settling and consolidating. At heightened altitudes the fresh snow has been intensively transported, and subsequently deposited in highly irregular fashion. Combs and knolls are frequently windblown down to the old snow. In bowls there are massive snowdrift accumulations. Bonding of the fresh snow to the old snow is still unfavourable, particularly on the north-facing slopes which are seldom skied on. Avalanche triggerings inside the uppermost layers of fresh snow and freshly generated snowdrifts continue to be possible.
Weak layers at ground level in the old snow are still evident, more than anywhere else in the Valais and in Grisons above approximately 2200 to 2400 m in all aspects. Avalanche triggerings in these more deeply embedded weak layers of the snowpack cannot be ruled out.

Observed weather on Wednesday, 17.03.2021

In the northern regions skies were heavily overcast for the most part and there was snowfall registered down to low lying areas. South of the Main Alpine Ridge it was quite sunny, in the inneralpine regions of the Valais and Grisons skies became partly bright during the course of the day.

Fresh snow
On Wednesday in the northern regions there was 10 to 20 cm of fresh snow registered over widespread areas, as much as 30 cm from the eastern Bernese Alps into the Glarus Alps. Thus, since the beginning of this period of precipitation on Saturday evening until Wednesday afternoon, the following overall amounts of fresh snow have been registered above approximately 1600 m:

- Lower Valais, regions north of an imaginative Rhine-Rhone line: 80 to 130 cm; in the furthermost western regions and from the Urner Alps into the Glarus Alps as much as 170 cm;
- Jura region, Mattertal, lower valleys of Visp, Goms, southern Gotthard region, remaining parts of northern Grisons, northern part of Lower Engadine: 50 to 90 cm;
- Saastal, Simplon region, northern Ticino (not including Bedretto), central Grisons, southern Lower Engadine, Val Müstair: 25 to 50 cm; further to the south, only a few centimetres or else it remained dry.

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m, between -5 °C in the western and the southern regions and -8 °C in the eastern regions.

Wind
Winds were northerly,

- during the nocturnal hours blowing at moderate to strong velocity; in the southern regions a northern foehn wind prevailed down to valley level in some places;
- during the daytime hours in the eastern regions still blowing at moderate to strong velocity, elsewhere slackening off and blowing predominantly at light to moderate strength.

Avalanche bulletin for Thursday, 18 March 2021

Weather forecast through Thursday, 18.03.2021

On Wednesday night in the northern regions, an additional small amount of snowfall is anticipated down to low lying areas. During the daytime on Thursday, skies in the northern regions will be variably cloudy accompanied by sunny intervals and snow showers from place to place. During the afternoon cloud cover will move in from the north. In the southern regions it will be quite sunny.

Fresh snow

Between Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning above approximately 1200 m:

- northern flank of the Alps from the eastern part of Bernese Oberland into the Alpstein region: 10 to 20 cm;
- Jura region, remaining parts of the northern flank of the Alps, Lower Valais, northern and central Grisons: 5 to 10 cm; in the other regions of Switzerland, less;
- in the southern regions it is expected to remain dry.

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, between -10 °C in the northern regions and -7 °C in the southern regions.

Wind

- During the nighttime hours in the southern and eastern regions, winds at heightened altitudes will be blowing at moderate strength, elsewhere blowing at light to moderate strength, from northerly to northeasterly directions;
- in the Jura region and the western Prealps, a moderate-velocity bise wind will be blowing.

Outlook through Saturday, 20.03.2021

Friday

Skies will be variably cloudy to heavily overcast and a small amount of snowfall is anticipated down to low lying areas over widespread regions. During the daytime the cloud cover is expected to disperse somewhat and in will become partly sunny in the Valais more than anywhere else. As a result of northeasterly winds, it will remain cold. Avalanche danger levels will incrementally decrease.

Saturday

In the northern and the eastern regions it will be partly sunny, partly cloudy and a small amount of snowfall is anticipated down to low lying areas. In the Valais and in the southern regions it will be partly sunny. As a result of northerly winds it is expected to remain cold. As a consequence of the strong-velocity bise wind in the Jura region and along the Prealps, snowdrift accumulations will be generated which are prone to triggering. In the remaining regions of Switzerland, avalanche danger levels will gradually decrease.