Avalanche bulletin for Saturday, 18 December 2021

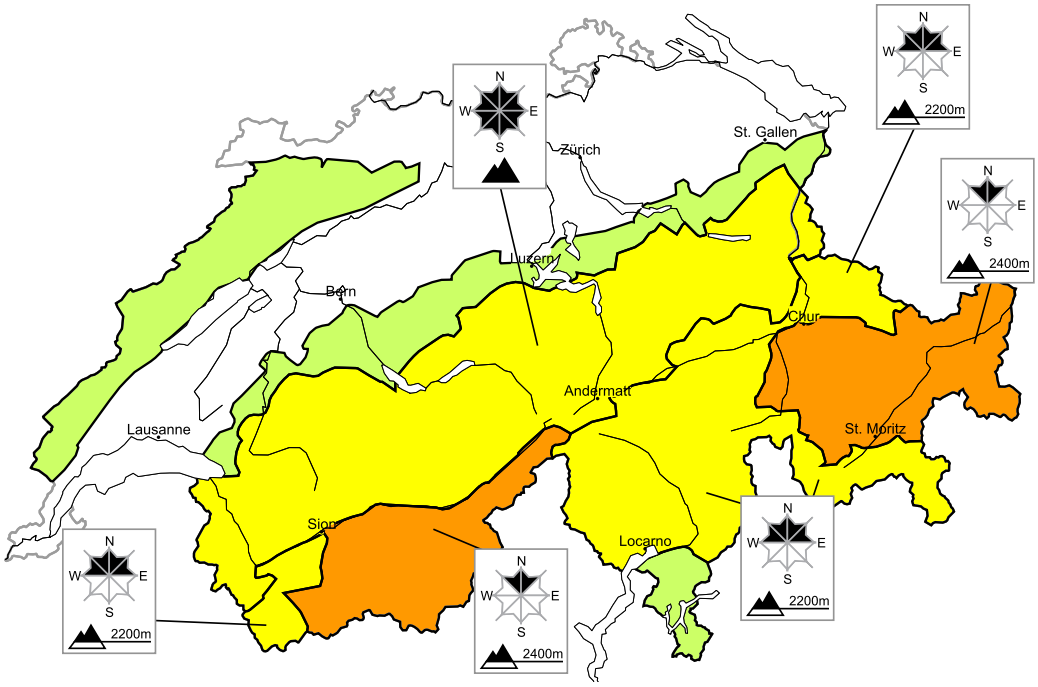
18.12.2021, 07:48

In the inneralpine regions a sometimes treacherous avalanche situation will prevail

Edition: 18.12.2021, 08:00 / Next update: 18.12.2021, 17:00

Avalanche danger

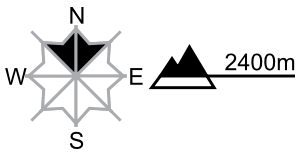
updated on 18.12.2021, 08:00



region A — Level 3, considerable

Old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Faceted weak layers exist in the bottom section of the snowpack. Avalanches can in some places be released by a single winter sport participant and reach dangerously large size. The avalanche prone locations are barely recognisable, even to the trained eye. Defensive route selection is required, especially on very steep shady slopes.

Gliding avalanches

Small to medium-sized gliding avalanches are possible. This applies on sunny slopes below approximately 2400 m, and on shady slopes below approximately 2000 m.

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

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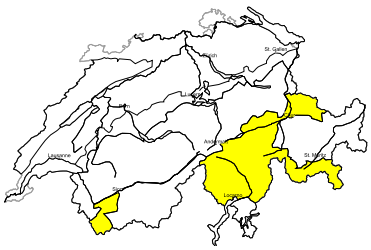
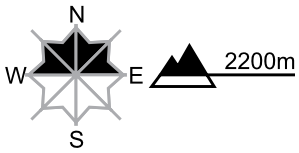
region B — Level 2, moderate



Old snow

Avalanche prone locations



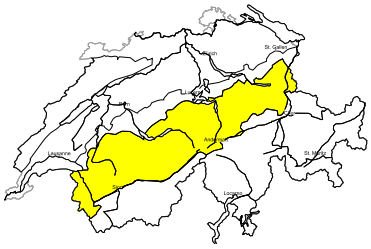
Danger description

Avalanches can in isolated cases be released in the old snowpack and reach medium size. These avalanche prone locations are to be found especially on shady slopes and on south facing slopes above approximately 2800 m. The avalanche prone locations are rare but are difficult to recognise. In addition mostly small wind slabs formed at elevated altitudes. Careful route selection is recommended.

Wet avalanches as day progresses

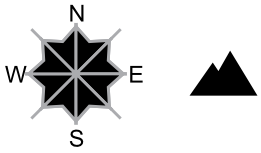
Small to medium-sized gliding avalanches are possible. This applies on sunny slopes below approximately 2400 m, and on shady slopes below approximately 2000 m.

region C — Level 2, moderate



Gliding avalanches

Avalanche prone locations



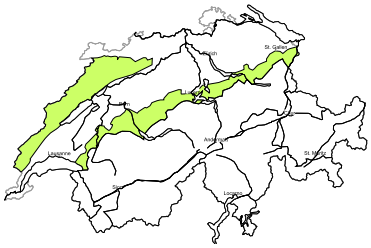
Danger description

Gliding snow represents the main danger.
In starting zones where no previous releases have taken place more medium-sized and, in isolated cases, large gliding avalanches are possible. This applies on sunny slopes below approximately 2400 m, and on shady slopes below approximately 2000 m. Gliding avalanches can be released at any time of day or night. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks.

Dry avalanches: no distinct avalanche problem

Individual avalanche prone locations for dry avalanches are to be found in particular on shady slopes above approximately 2200 m. The more recent wind slabs can be released in some cases. They are mostly small. In very isolated cases avalanches can also be released in the old snowpack and reach medium size. Careful route selection is recommended.

region D — Level 1, low

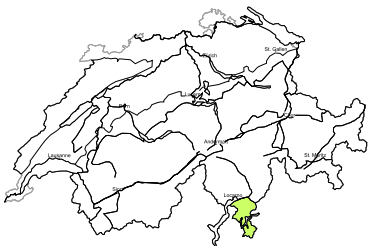


Gliding avalanches

Individual small to medium-sized gliding avalanches and wet snow slides are possible. Caution is to be exercised in areas with glide cracks.

region E

Level 1, low



No distinct avalanche problem

Only a little snow is lying. Individual avalanche prone locations for dry avalanches are to be found in particular on shady slopes above approximately 2000 m. Restraint should be exercised because avalanches can sweep people along and give rise to falls.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 17.12.2021, 17:00

Snowpack

In the lower part of the snowpack, particularly on west-facing, north-facing and east-facing slopes above approximately 2200 m, weak layers are evident. In the western part of Lower Valais and on the northern flank of the Alps, these ground-level layers are covered over by thick layers of fresher snow so that the likelihood of avalanches triggering from them by persons is low. From central Valais over the Ticino as far as Grisons, as well as generally in places where the snow is shallow, the snowpack layering is least favourable. In those places there have been isolated medium-to-large sized avalanches triggered by persons during the last few days.
The activity of gliding avalanches is incrementally decreasing to some degree. From steep grass-covered slopes which have not yet discharged, however, further gliding avalanches are possible. In the regions of the west and the north where recent snowfall has been heaviest, these releases can be large-sized in places. As a result of daytime warming and solar radiation, the snowpack on steep south-facing slopes is superficially moist. During a night of clear skies on Friday, a melt-freeze crust is expected to form on the snowpack surface. On steep south-facing slopes this crust will be capable of bearing loads in the morning.

Observed weather on Friday, 17.12.2021

On Friday it was sunny in the mountains, following a night of clear skies.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

· At midday at 2000 m, +6 °C;
· the zero-degree level was at 2800 to 3200 m.

Wind

· Winds at high altitudes were blowing at moderate to strong velocity from northeasterly directions;
· in the Ticino, a moderate-strength northerly foehn wind was blowing.

Weather forecast through Saturday, 18.12.2021

Following a night of clear skies it will be sunny in the mountains.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m, +8 °C in the western regions, +5 °C in the southern regions, and +3 °C in the eastern regions.

Wind

· Winds at high altitudes will be blowing at moderate to strong velocity from northeasterly directions, slackening off somewhat during the course of the day;
· on the southern flank of the Alps, moderate-strength northerly foehn wind will be blowing, particularly during the nighttime hours.

Outlook through Monday, 20.12.2021

It will be rather sunny in the mountains on both days. The temperatures will incrementally decrease. The wind will be blowing predominantly at light to moderate strength.
The danger of dry-snow avalanches is not expected to change significantly. Some gliding avalanches are ongoingly possible.