Avalanche bulletin through Sunday, 15 May 2022

12.5.2022, 16:52

Wet-snow avalanches during the course of the day. Backcountry tours should be terminated early.

Edition: 12.5.2022, 17:00 / Next update: In the event of heavy snowfall

Avalanche danger

Wet-snow avalanches during the course of the day

As a consequence of reduced nocturnal outgoing longwave radiation in some places and the mild temperatures, the snowpack surface is able to freeze only above 2500 m. The melt-freeze crust is quite thin and softens swiftly during the daytime due to solar radiation. Even in the morning hours, medium-sized to in isolated cases large-sized wet-snow avalanches can be expected. This is particularly the case on very steep north-facing slopes below approximately 3000 m, as well as in general in the high alpine regions. Moist slides and avalanches are possible in all aspects in those zones.
In the inner alpine regions more than anywhere else, wet slab avalanches can be triggered by persons and fracture even down to more deeply embedded layers of the snowpack in some areas.
Tours in outlying terrain and exposed ascents to mountain refuges should be brought to an end early in the day. Also hikers should be aware that even a small snowslide can force a fall.

Danger of dry-snow avalanches

The danger of dry-snow avalanches continues to prevail only in the high alpine regions. Avalanches can be triggered in particular on very steep north-facing slopes in the near-surface layers of the snow cover. The dangers of being swept along and forced to take a fall need to be taken into consideration.

Snow and weather

Snowpack

The process of the snowpack becoming thoroughly wet continues on the north-facing slopes, is progressing up to nearly 3000 m, and on the east-facing, south-facing and west-facing slopes as far up as high alpine regions. With the first time the snowpack becomes thoroughly wet, it forfeits its stability; wet-snow avalanches can subsequently be expected. Particularly on north-facing slopes below 3000 m, avalanches can sweep away the entire snowpack.

Review to Monday, 9 May

Nocturnal skies on Sunday night were partly overcast, accompanied by some showers. During the daytime hours on Monday it was quite sunny to start with. During the afternoon, convective cloud build-up was registered and there were heavy showers and thunderstorms in some places. The snowfall level lay between 2400 m and 2900 m.
Between Tuesday and Thursday the nighttime skies were predominantly clear. During the daytime hours it was quite sunny, accompanied by convective cloud build-up during the course of the day. The zero-degree level lay between 3500 m and 4000 m.

Outlook through Sunday, 15 May

It will continue to be quite mild; the zero-degree level will lie at approximately 3500 m.
Nocturnal skies on Thursday night will be overcast for the most part, and showers are possible. During the morning hours on Friday it will be partly sunny in the inneralpine and the southern regions, in the other regions of Switzerland overcast skies with some showers. In the high alpine regions, a moderate to strong westerly wind will be blowing.
Nocturnal skies on Friday night and Saturday night will be only partly clear. On Friday night the outgoing longwave radiation will be reduced in Ticino and the eastern regions, on Saturday night reduced outgoing radiation is expected in the western regions and in Ticino more than anywhere else. During the daytime on Saturday it will be quite sunny, accompanied by convective cloud build-up and isolated showers during the afternoon in the southern regions in particular.
On Sunday it will be only partially sunny and swift convective cloud build-up is expected, accompanied by showers.

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Outlook

It is expected to remain mild, with a tendency towards variable conditions. Wet-snow avalanches continue to be possible, triggered from slopes which have not yet discharged.

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