

Considerable avalanche danger regionally at high altitudes

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Avalanche danger

Western Lower Valais, northern Alpine Ridge from the Chablais as far as the Reuss

At elevated altitudes avalanche danger is considerable (Level 3). Avalanche prone locations for dry-snow slab avalanches are to be found on shady slopes above approximately 2400 m, on sunny slopes above approximately 2800 m. Avalanches can be triggered even by one sole person, particularly on wind-protected, wind-loaded slopes where there has been a lot of snowfall, and in gullies and bowls in all aspects. In isolated cases avalanches can grow to large size, more than anywhere else on north-facing and on east-facing slopes.

Northern Alpine Ridge east of the Reuss, remaining parts of the Valais, Grisons not including the Moesa region and Val Poschiavo

The avalanche prone locations for dry-snow slab avalanches are to be found on shady slopes above approximately 2400 m, on sunny slopes above approximately 2800 m. Avalanches can be triggered by one single person in some places and subsequently grow to medium size. Caution is urged on wind-loaded slopes and in gullies and bowls which are filled with snowdrifts in particular.

Remaining regions of Switzerland

Isolated avalanche prone locations for dry-snow avalanches are located in extremely steep terrain at elevated altitudes more than anywhere else. Avalanches are generally small-sized, but can sweep along persons and force them to take a fall.

Snow and weather

Snowpack

As a result of fresh fallen snow and strong-velocity winds, snowdrift accumulations which in some places are prone to triggering have been generated over the last few days. Particularly in the western and the northern regions, these snowdrift accumulations will grow somewhat further in magnitude as a result of the fresh snow.

Fresh snow and freshly generated snowdrifts from this week have been deposited on top of a shallow snowpack over widespread areas. Above approximately 2600 m the roughness of the ground is already smoothed over somewhat, and inside the snowpack there are expansively metamorphosed (faceted) layers evident on shady slopes in particular. The snow cover at elevated altitudes has been subjected to heavy wind influence. Most of the snow has been deposited in gullies and bowls.

On sunny slopes there is still very little snow on the ground even up into high alpine regions.

Weather review to Tuesday, 22 November

On Tuesday skies were heavily overcast for the most part and there was a small amount of snowfall over far-reaching areas, most of which fell in the western regions. The snowfall level lay at 1400 m to start with, subsequently descended down to 1000 m during Tuesday night. On Wednesday it was sunny to begin with. During the course of the day, clouds moved in from the west and in the afternoon snowfall set in above 1400 m. The wind on Tuesday was blowing at moderate to strong velocity from westerly to northwesterly directions, on Wednesday winds were frequently moderate, blowing from the west.

Between Monday evening and Wednesday morning the following amounts of fresh snow were registered above approximately 1800 m:

- Northern and furthestmost western parts of Lower Valais: 20 to 40 cm;
- northern flank of the Alps not including the Prealps, remaining parts of Lower Valais and remaining parts of northern Valais, Grisons: 10 to 20 cm;
- remaining regions of Switzerland: 5 to 10 cm.

Weather outlook through Friday, 25 November

On Thursday, skies in the northern regions will be heavily overcast to start with and above 1200 m snowfall is anticipated. During the course of the morning hours the snowfall is expected to come to an end from the west and it will subsequently become increasingly sunny. Winds will be blowing at strong velocity from westerly to northwesterly directions. On Friday, skies in the northern regions will range from variably cloudy to heavily overcast and intermittent snowfall is expected above approximately 1400 m. During the morning it is expected to be partly sunny in northern and central Grisons. The wind will be blowing generally at moderate strength from westerly directions. In the southern regions it will be predominantly sunny on Thursday, on Friday only partly so, accompanied by cloudbanks. South of the Main Alpine Ridge a northwesterly wind will be blowing, mostly at moderate strength.

Between Wednesday evening and Friday evening, the following amounts of fresh snow are expected above 1800 m:

- Furthestmost western part of Lower Valais, northern Alpine Ridge: 15 to 30 cm;
- in the remaining regions of Switzerland, 10 to 15 cm over widespread areas; less in the southern regions and in central Grisons, or else it will remain dry.

Outlook

During Friday night in the northern and eastern regions, a small amount of additional snowfall is anticipated above 1100 m. During the daytime on Saturday it will be predominantly sunny in the western and southern regions, increasingly sunny in the eastern regions. On Sunday it will be mostly sunny in the mountains and it is expected to be significantly milder. During the course of the day, high-altitude cloudbanks will move in to an increasing degree.

The danger of dry-snow avalanches will decrease, but on shady slopes only incrementally. On sunny slopes, moist slides can be expected during the course of each day.