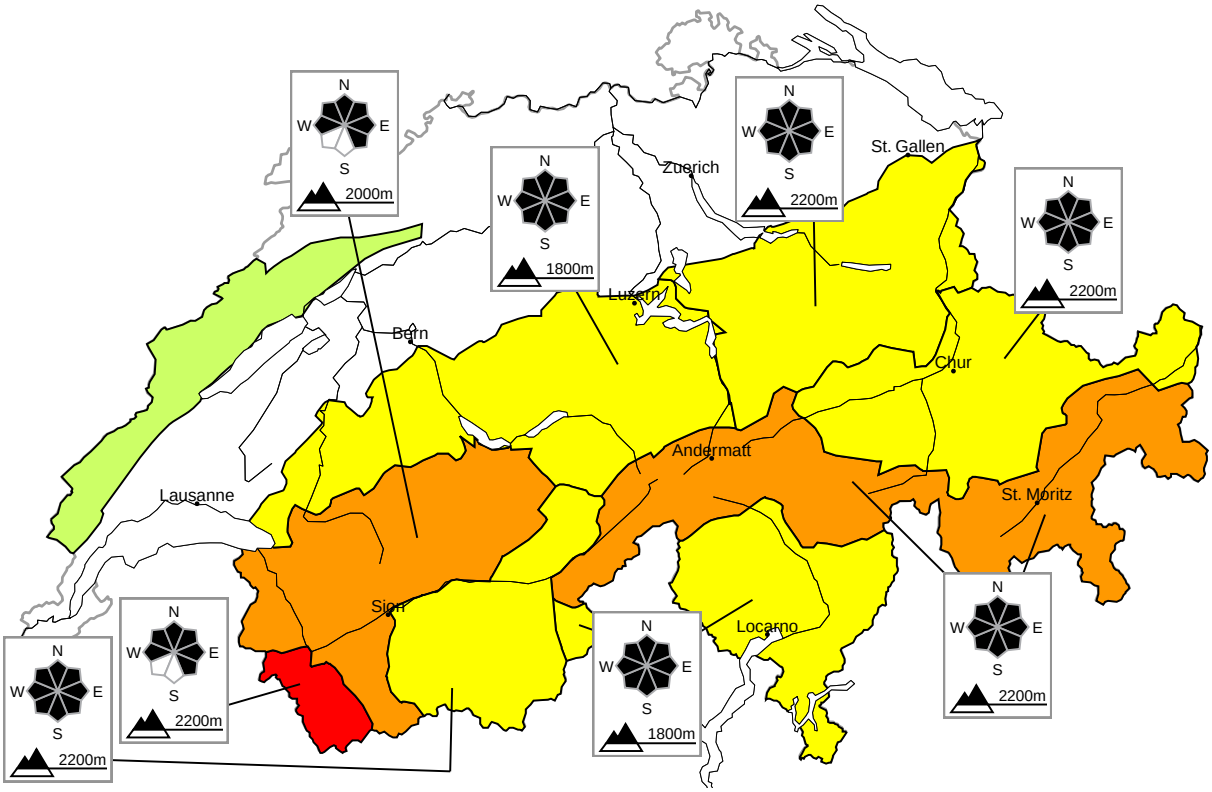
Avalanche bulletin for Tuesday, 13. December 2022

Increase in avalanche danger, in particular in the west, and at elevated altitudes

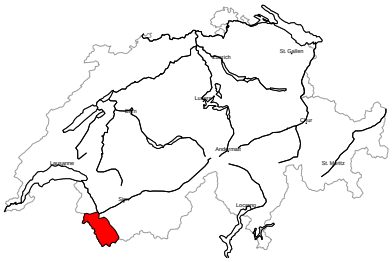
Edition: 13.12.2022, 08:00 / Next update: 13.12.2022, 17:00

Avalanche danger

updated on 13.12.2022, 08:00

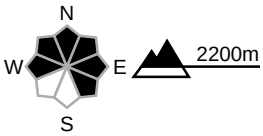


region A | **High, Level 4-**



Snow drift, Old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The danger exists primarily in alpine snow sports terrain. As a consequence of new snow and a strengthening westerly wind, avalanche prone wind slabs will form. Avalanches can to an increasing extent be released very easily. They can release deeper layers of the snowpack and reach dangerously large size. The number and size of avalanche prone locations will increase as the day progresses. An increasing number of natural avalanches are possible.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and great restraint.

Danger levels 1 low 2 moderate 3 considerable 4 high 5 very high

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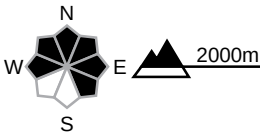
region B — Considerable, Level 3+

Snow drift, Old snow

Avalanche prone locations



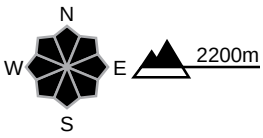
Danger description

As a consequence of a strengthening westerly wind, avalanche prone wind slabs will form. The fresh and somewhat older wind slabs are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack on west to north to east facing aspects. Avalanches can be released, even by a single winter sport participant and reach large size in isolated cases. As the day progresses individual natural avalanches are possible.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

region C — Considerable, Level 3-

Old snow, Snow drift

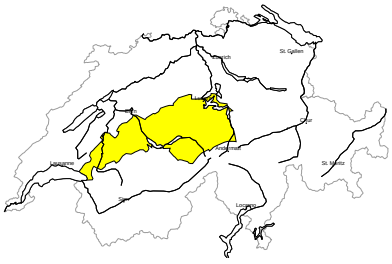
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

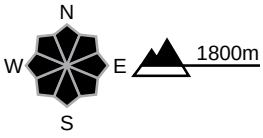
As a consequence of westerly wind, mostly small wind slabs will form at elevated altitudes. The fresh and somewhat older wind slabs are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack. Avalanches can be released by a single winter sport participant. In particular on west, north and east facing slopes they can penetrate even deep layers and reach large size in isolated cases. Backcountry touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

region D — Moderate, Level 2+



Old snow, New snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of a strengthening westerly wind, avalanche prone wind slabs will form. The fresh and somewhat older wind slabs are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack on west to north to east facing aspects. These avalanche prone locations are to be found especially in gullies and bowls. The avalanche danger will increase a little during the day. Avalanches can in some places be released easily and reach medium size.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for careful route selection.

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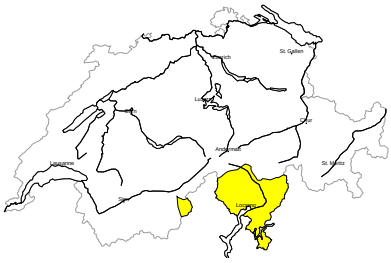
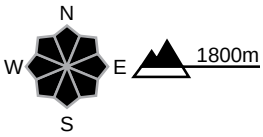
region E

Moderate, Level 2=



Snow drift, Old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

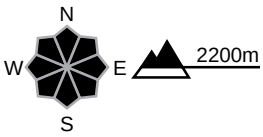
The somewhat older wind slabs are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack on west to north to southeast facing aspects. The wind slabs are clearly recognisable to the trained eye. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain. Avalanches can additionally in very isolated cases be released in near-ground layers on shady slopes. In particular here medium-sized avalanches are possible. Backcountry touring calls for careful route selection.

region F

Moderate, Level 2=

Old snow, Snow drift

Avalanche prone locations

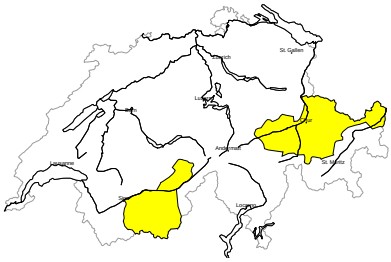


Danger description

The wind slabs of the last few days are covered with new snow in some cases and therefore difficult to recognise. As a consequence of a freshening westerly wind, further wind slabs will form in the afternoon. The fresh and older wind slabs are in some cases prone to triggering.
Avalanches can additionally be released in the weakly bonded old snow in particular on west, north and east facing slopes. They can reach medium size. These avalanche prone locations are to be found especially in gullies and bowls. In high Alpine regions the avalanche prone locations are more prevalent and larger.
Careful route selection is advisable.

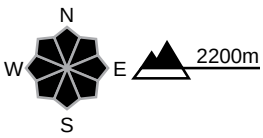
region G

Moderate, Level 2=



Old snow, Snow drift

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The wind slabs of the last few days are covered with new snow in some cases and therefore difficult to recognise. As a consequence of a gathering strong westerly wind, further wind slabs will form in the course of the day in particular in high Alpine regions. The fresh and older wind slabs are in some cases prone to triggering.
Avalanches can additionally be released in the weakly bonded old snow in particular on west, north and east facing slopes. They can reach medium size. These avalanche prone locations are to be found especially in gullies and bowls. In high Alpine regions the avalanche prone locations are more prevalent and larger.
Careful route selection is advisable.

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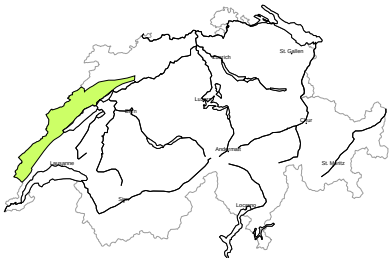
region H

Low, Level 1



Snow drift

Thus far only a little snow is lying.
The wind will transport the new snow and, in some cases, old snow as well. In gullies and bowls and behind abrupt changes in the terrain wind slabs will form. These are only small but in some cases prone to triggering. They are to be avoided in extreme terrain. Restraint should be exercised because avalanches can sweep people along and give rise to falls.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 12.12.2022, 17:00

Snowpack

Snow depths at high altitudes are average for the time of year in the extreme west of Lower Valais, but below average in all other regions. At 2500 m the snow depth in western Lower Valais and in northwest Ticino is approximately 80 cm. Elsewhere 40 to 60 cm of snow is lying over a wide area, but the amounts are smaller in some parts of central Valais and central Grisons.
In particular on shady slopes above approximately 2200 to 2400 m, weak faceted layers exist deeper in the snowpack over a wide area. In the west and on the main Alpine ridge from the Matterhorn into the Bernina region and to the south, these layers are already embedded so deep that even large avalanches are possible. The weekend's fresh snow and snow drift accumulations remain prone to triggering in some places. As the southwesterly wind strengthens, on Tuesday both the fresh snow and loosely bonded old snow near the surface will be transported.

Observed weather review Monday, 12.12.2022

The weather in the mountains was quite sunny, with high-altitude cloudbanks in the west in particular.

Fresh snow
-

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m: between -8 °C in the west and -11 °C in the east

Wind
Light to moderate from the west to northwest

Weather forecast through Tuesday, 13.12.2022

During Monday night, cloud will build up from the west. During the day it will remain quite sunny in some parts of the far east and in the south, but elsewhere it will be mostly very cloudy. A little snow will fall in the west and north, even in the lowlands. In the afternoon the snowfall level will rise rapidly to approximately 1200 m.

Fresh snow
The outlook is uncertain. In the period from Monday evening until Tuesday afternoon the following amounts of snow will fall above approximately 1000 m:
- Lower Valais, Vaud Alps: 5 to 10 cm; on the border to France, up to 20 cm
- Rest of the northern flank of the Alps, Upper Valais, northern Ticino: locally up to 5 cm

Temperature
Increasing from the west to reach between -3 °C in the west and -8 °C in the east, and -10 °C in the south at midday at 2000 m

Wind
- During Tuesday night strengthening in the Alps, during the day moderate to strong in the northwest, and moderate in the northeast and south, from the southwest to west
- In the Jura initially a moderate bise wind, turning southwesterly and strengthening in the afternoon

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Outlook through Thursday, 15.12.2022

Wednesday

Wednesday will be mostly very cloudy; isolated bright spells are likely only in the south. Except in the regions south of the main Alpine ridge, some precipitation will fall over a wide area, chiefly in the far west. The amounts of precipitation remain uncertain: from Tuesday evening until Wednesday evening above approximately1800 m, 5 to 10 cm of snow could fall in the west and north, and 10 to 25 cm could fall in the far west. It will become mild and the snowfall level will rise towards 2000 m. At elevated altitudes the strong, sometimes storm force westerly wind will transport both the fresh snow and loosely bonded old snow.

The danger of dry avalanches will increase over a wide area; depending on the amounts of fresh snow, the increase is likely to be most significant in the west. Rain will give rise to the likelihood of moist snow slides and gliding avalanches at intermediate altitudes, in the west and north in particular.

Thursday

The mostly dry second half of Wednesday night will be followed by variable to dense cloud cover on Thursday with light precipitation in the afternoon in particular. The snowfall level will drop in the north from 1800 m to approximately 1200 m. In the south, snow will fall even at low altitudes. The wind will be moderate to strong from the west, but from the southwest during the day.

The avalanche danger will not change significantly.