Avalanche bulletin through Wednesday, 24 January 2018

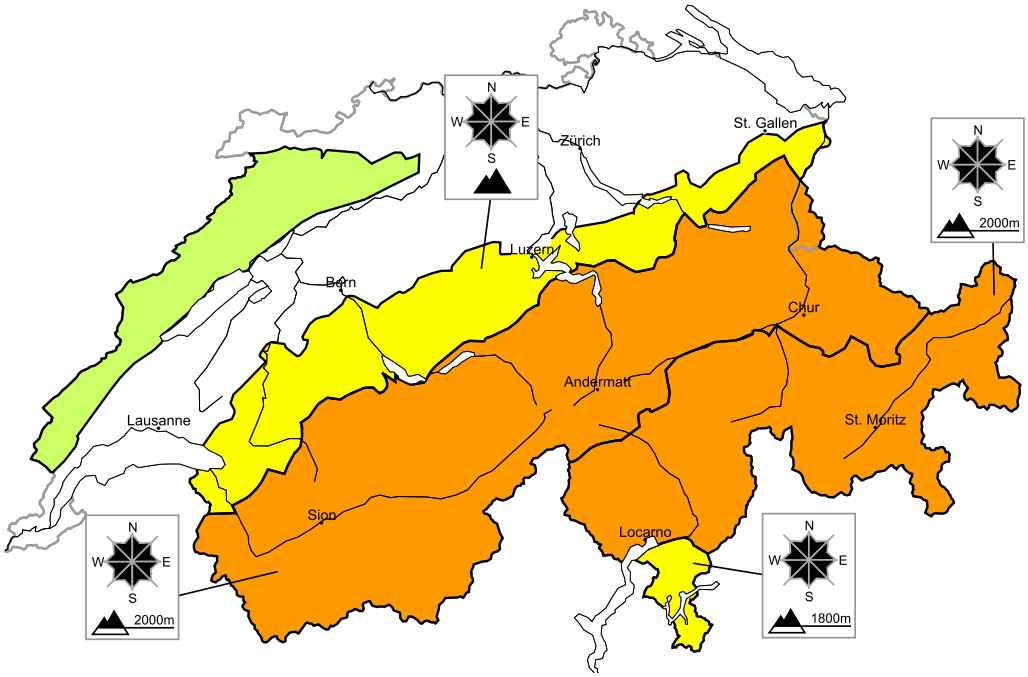
23.1.2018, 17:31

Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area

Edition: 23.1.2018, 17:00 / Next update: 24.1.2018, 08:00

Avalanche danger

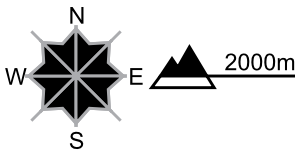
updated on 23.1.2018, 17:00



region A | **Level 3, considerable**

Fresh snow and snow drifts, old snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations are prone to triggering. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. Avalanches can be released, even by a single winter sport participant. They can penetrate deep layers and reach dangerously large size.
Snow sport activities outside marked and open pistes call for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and great restraint.

Full-depth avalanches

Below approximately 2200 m full-depth avalanches are to be expected. This applies in all aspects. They can be released at any time of day or night. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided as far as possible.

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

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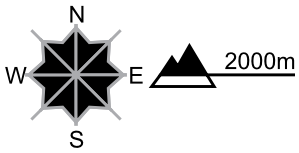
region B — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Avalanches can be released in near-surface layers by people. Fresh and somewhat older snow drift accumulations are to be evaluated with care and prudence.
In very isolated cases avalanches can also be triggered in deep layers and reach dangerously large size. Caution is to be exercised in areas where the snow cover is rather shallow. Careful route selection and spacing between individuals are recommended.
Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

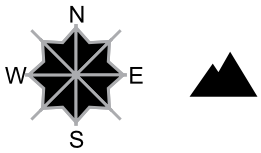
Full-depth avalanches

Below approximately 2200 m full-depth avalanches are to be expected, including quite large ones. This applies in all aspects. They can be released at any time of day or night. Exposed parts of transportation routes can be endangered. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

region C — Level 2, moderate

Full-depth avalanches

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

In all aspects full-depth avalanches are to be expected, including quite large ones. They can be released at any time of day or night. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided as far as possible.

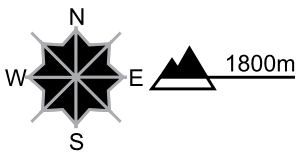
Fresh snow and snow drifts

The fresh snow and snow drift accumulations of the last few days are in some cases still prone to triggering at elevated altitudes. This applies in particular in case of a large load. Caution is to be exercised at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack.

region D — Level 2, moderate

Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The snow drift accumulations of the last few days are in some cases still prone to triggering. They are to be evaluated with care and prudence in steep terrain. Careful route selection is recommended.

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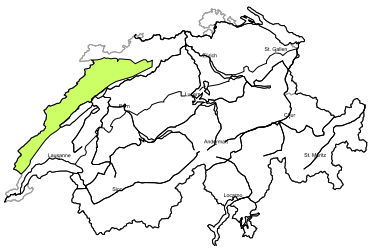
region E

Level 1, low



A favourable avalanche situation will prevail. Individual avalanche prone locations are to be found in particular in extremely steep terrain. Restraint should be exercised because avalanches can sweep people along and give rise to falls.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 23.1.2018, 17:00

Snowpack

During a precipitation period lasting one week, enormous quantities of snow have fallen everywhere except in the far south. Some stations measured greater aggregated 7-day fresh snow depths than ever before. Westerly to northwesterly winds that were frequently strong have transported large quantities of snow. On Monday the snowfall level rose to 2000 to 2200 m over a wide area. In many regions numerous large and isolated very large avalanches were released. The ending of the precipitation period coincided with a significant decrease in natural avalanche activity. The stability of the deep snowpack is increasing quickly. Avalanches releasing all the layers of fresh and drifted snow that were deposited last week are now possible only in isolated cases. If such avalanches should occur, however, they can reach a dangerously large size.
Less snow fell towards the south. In central Grisons, Upper Engadine and the Grisons southern valleys the old snowpack is weaker, so that avalanches can penetrate near-ground layers in isolated cases.
Throughout Switzerland snow depths are well above average for the time of year. At high altitudes in southern Valais, northern Grisons and northern Lower Engadine, in some cases they are close to the extreme values measured at the end of February 1999.

Observed weather on Tuesday, 23.01.2018

During the night snow continued to fall everywhere except in the far south. The snowfall level was approximately 2000 to 2200 m at first and then fell. During the day the weather became quite sunny in the mountains. Below approximately 2000 m there was fog in the north, but it dispersed partially in the west as the day progressed.

Fresh snow

On Monday night 20 to 30 cm of snow fell north of a line between the Rhone and Rhine and in Lower Engadine, but the quantities were smaller further south. This marked the end of a one-week precipitation period, during which the following aggregate amounts of snow fell above approximately 2000 m:

- Northern Alpine ridge, Valais, Gotthard region, Davos, Silvretta and Samnaun: 2 to 3 m over a wide area, but even more in some places in the Glarus Alps and northern Lower Valais
- Remaining regions on the northern flank of the Alps, and remaining regions of northern Ticino, of northern and central Grisons, and of Lower Engadine: 1 to 2 m
- Central Ticino, Upper Engadine, Val Müstair: 50 to 100 cm, smaller amounts elsewhere
- In the Jura most of the fresh snow has since been melted by rain

Temperature

At midday at 2000 m: between -3 °C in the north and +3 °C in the south

Wind

- During the first half of the night, storm force at times from the west
- During the day in Grisons and in the morning on the northern Alpine ridge, strong at times, otherwise light to moderate from the north

Weather forecast through Wednesday, 24.01.2018

In the mountains it will be sunny and mild.

Fresh snow

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Temperature

At midday at 2000 m: between +5 °C in the north and +1 °C in the south

Wind

The wind will veer southwesterly and be mostly moderate. In the afternoon a moderate foehn wind will gradually develop.

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Outlook through Friday, 26.01.2018

Thursday

It will remain fairly sunny at first. During the day cloud will build up from the west and south. There will be a strong wind from the southwest, and a foehn wind in the northern valleys. Fresh snow drift accumulations will pose the main avalanche danger. Gliding avalanches are also to be expected; these can be fairly large in the regions with a lot of snow.

Friday

During the night the southwesterly wind, and the foehn wind in the northern valleys, will persist. During the day the wind in the northern regions will veer northeasterly. It will be very cloudy everywhere and precipitation will fall over a wide area. The precipitation will be concentrated in the south, but the amounts remain uncertain. The danger of dry avalanches is likely to increase significantly in the south and a little in the north. Gliding avalanches are still to be expected; these can be fairly large in the regions with a lot of snow.