

# Avalanche News

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

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## SLAB AVALANCHES AT HIGH ALTITUDES, FULL DEPTH WET SNOWSLIDES AT LOWER ALTITUDES

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### AVALANCHE DANGER

Slab avalanches are a potential hazard for backcountry skiers and freeriders at present, and not only where there was a cohesive old snowpack before the current snowfall. This applies primarily to west to north to east facing steep slopes above approximately 2500 m. Above about 3000 m, slab avalanches in all aspects are possible, on south facing slopes especially in steep terrain adjacent to ridge lines. Brittle snowdrift accumulations in these areas can be triggered even by single persons. Isolated natural avalanches are also possible in high alpine regions on extremely steep, shady slopes in the southern Ötztal and Stubai Alps and the Silvretta-Samnaun regions in particular. Their reaching distance is not especially great, however, due to the overall snow depths. In those western and northern regions of North Tyrol with lots of snow, isolated full depth wet snowslides are possible on very steep grassy slopes. Conditions in East Tyrol are more favourable, although even there, freshly formed snowdrift on steep slopes above about 2300 m should be strictly avoided whenever possible.

### SNOW LAYERING

In North Tyrol's mountains, deepest winter conditions currently prevail. Over the last 24 hours, 60 to 90 cm of snow has fallen in far western regions, whereas in eastern regions of North Tyrol, 30 to 50 cm of snow fell. In East Tyrol along the Main Alpine Ridge there was up to 25 cm of snowfall, further to the south, maximum 10 cm. The snow was accompanied by persistently strong winds, which led to the formation of many new snowdrift accumulations. These are deposited in shady regions at high altitudes, above approximately 2300 to 2500 m, often atop an old snowpack. This is the case in all aspects in upper and high alpine regions. The old snowpack, since it was often faceted, is bonding poorly with the new snow, in general. In addition, the snowdrift masses remain extremely brittle due to the low temperatures, which in turn makes them more prone to triggering.

### ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

A wide ranging low pressure zone over Scandinavia is supplying cold, moist air and stormy winds to Central Europe. The Alps are creating a north barrier effect: the peaks on the northern flank of the Alps and on the Main Alpine Ridge are shrouded in cloudbanks. In the Dolomites, bright spells and little or no precipitation are expected. Very low, wintery temperatures and icy winds. The temperature at 2000 m is minus 12 degrees, at 3000 m minus 20 degrees. Strong to stormy northwesterly winds prevail.

### SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

By tomorrow in those regions which already have a great deal of new snow, an additional 30 to 50 cm of snow is quite possible. The wind strength will subside a bit. Temperatures will remain low, the snowpack in the regions referred to above is prone to triggering. Backcountry skiers and freeriders should exercise enormous caution over coming days in higher altitudes, particularly towards wind loaded, steep slopes. The next information on the avalanche situation will be published as soon as significant changes occur.

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Translated by Jeffrey McCabe