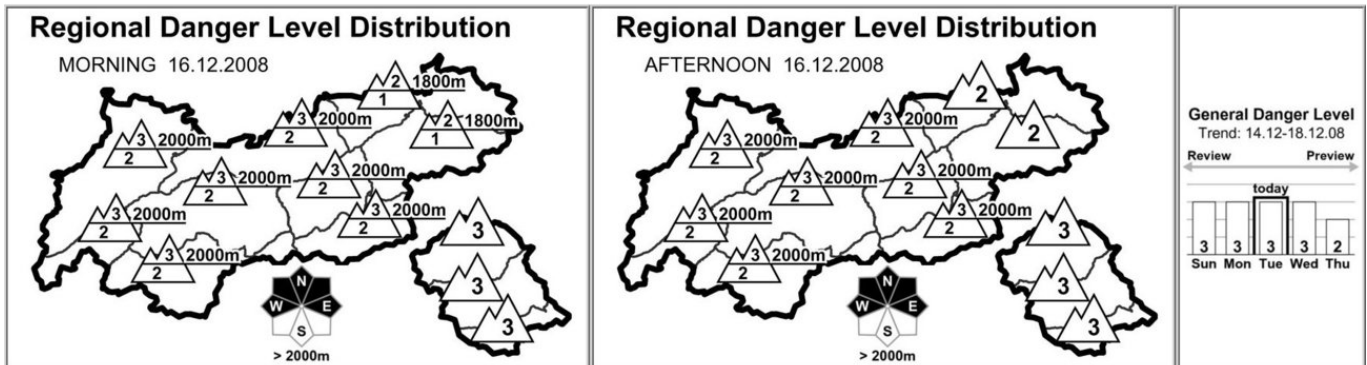


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Tuesday, 16.12.2008, at 07:30



FULL DEPTH SNOWSLIDES AND FRESH SNOWDRIFT ACCUMULATIONS STILL MAJOR HAZARD

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche situation throughout East Tyrol is still considerable. Towards the north, the hazards generally depend on the altitude. Below about 2000 m in northern regions, moderate danger prevails widespread, above that altitude it is considerable, by and large. There are two persistent sources of danger. In the regions with lots of snow, namely East Tyrol and the southern Ötztal and Stubai Alps and parts of the Zillertal Alps, snow can increasingly be unleashed on steep grassy hillsides. Such full depth snowslides are indicated by glide cracks in the snowpack, yet are not influenced by additional loading. The currently increasing moistness which penetrates the snowpack tends to make such snowslides more probable. And above approximately 2000 m, in addition, recently formed snowdrift accumulations must also be heeded. Due to strong winds over the last few days, it is difficult to generalize the particularly endangered aspects. Nevertheless, in increasingly amounts the snowdrift is found in west to north to east facing gullies and bowls. With experience in the assessment of avalanche danger, these avalanche prone locations can be clearly recognized, assuming visibility permits.

SNOW LAYERING

The snowpack surface has become generally moist down to intermediate altitudes, due to the increase in temperatures. At higher altitudes, strong winds have caused widespread snow transport, creating a highly irregular distribution of the snow masses. The snowpack is layered quite stably, in general. Potential bed surfaces for slab avalanches are currently the drifted over, newly fallen snow near the surface, on the one hand; and in high alpine regions along the Main Alpine Ridge in the Zillertal Alps and westwards thereof, a layer of depth hoar near the ground on shady slopes. With increasing altitude, the bonding of snowdrift to the loose snowpack becomes weaker and weaker, making the likelihood of triggering an avalanche higher.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Very windy in places. The northern Alps will be predominantly free of clouds, making visibility good, even amid scattered clouds. Only on the Main Alpine Ridge are cloudbanks congested on the southern flank, with a few snowflakes anticipated. Primarily in the southern Dolomites and the Carnic Alps, some snowfall is expected. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 2 to plus 2 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 4 degrees. Brisk, gusty southerly winds, of storm strength in some places.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

The avalanche danger will gradually subside.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe