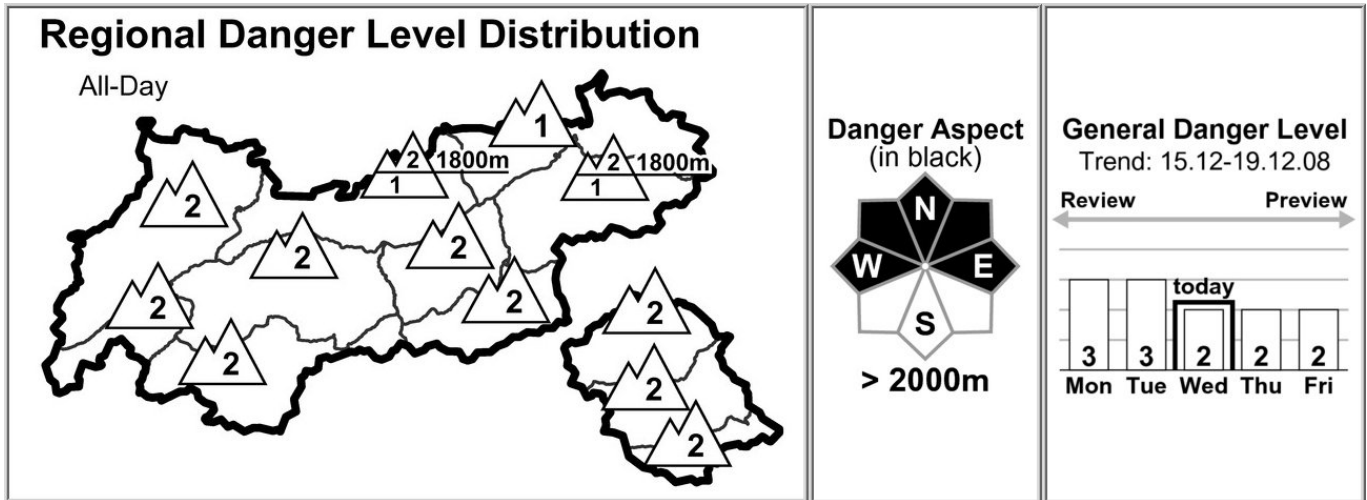


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Wednesday, 17.12.2008, at 07:30



SNOWSLIDES ON STEEP, GRASSY SLOPES STILL A DANGER, OTHERWISE GENERALLY FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger is now generally moderate; in northern regions it is widespread low, at least below the treeline. The major hazard still stems from the full depth snowslides in the regions with lots of snow, namely, East Tyrol and the southern Ötztal, Stubai and Zillertal Alps. Such approaching avalanches are always indicated by glide cracks in the snowpack; thus they can at least be easily avoided by backcountry skiers and freeriders. Above the treeline, particularly on west to north to east facing slopes, there are also increased snowdrift accumulations. In wind protected, high altitude areas, especially in transition areas from little to lots of snow, these can in small dimensions be triggered by minimum additional loading. In high alpine regions, the situation is somewhat more favourable due to the great influence which the wind has recently exerted, making the hard wind crust more difficult to disturb.

SNOW LAYERING

In southern East Tyrol it has snowed again: 15 cm in the eastern Dolomites, 5 cm in the East Tyrol Tauern. The winds are gradually decreasing in strength, but at higher altitudes are still causing snow to be transported. The snowpack is generally well layered. Significant potential bed surfaces for avalanches are to be found just beneath the freshly formed snowdrift accumulations in the form of loosely packed new snow, primarily above approximately 1800 m. The bonding of the snowdrift to this layer of new snow improves day by day. In high alpine regions along the Main Alpine Ridge west of the Zillertal Alps, in addition, a fundament of depth hoar on shady slopes from early winter is also a potential hazard.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

The low pressure front over the western Mediterranean is moving towards the Adriatic, the air current is incrementally shifting from southerly to northeasterly. Thus, North Tyrol will get some precipitation, while the southern flank of the Alps will remain dry. The peaks are generally cloudless, but the summits are often wreathed. It is expected to remain predominantly dry, with weakening winds and decreasing temperatures. In the southern Alps, the snow showers will subside over the course of the day, but visibility will remain impeded. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 4 to minus 7 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 9 to minus 12 degrees and falling. Moderate winds predominantly from the south, during the morning hours they will still be quite brisk.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

To begin with, no marked change in the avalanche situation.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe