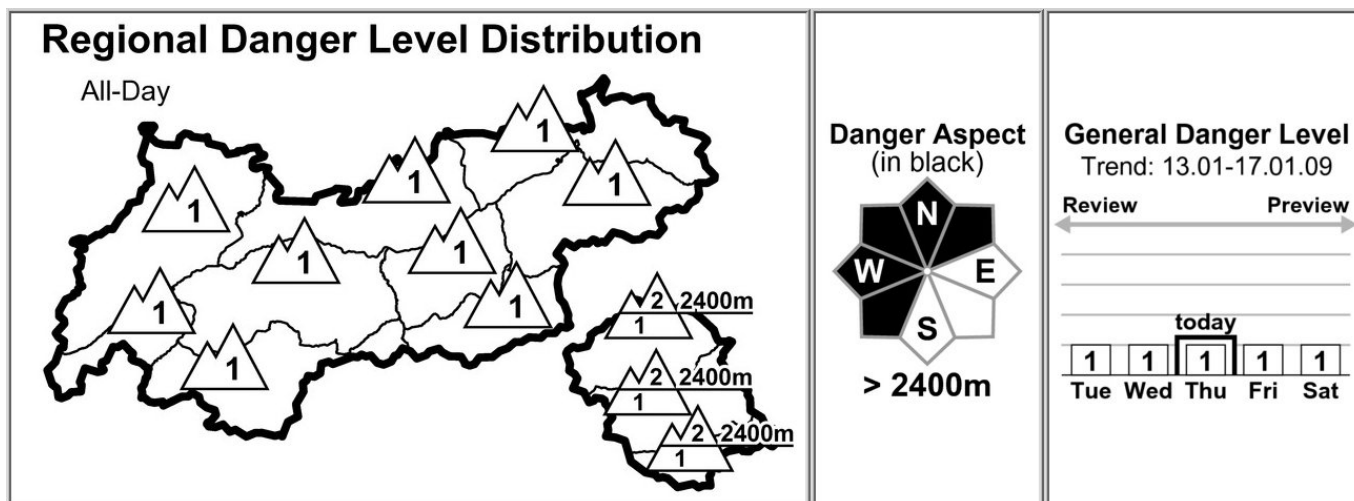


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Thursday, 15.01.2009, at 07:30



FAVOURABLE AVALANCHE SITUATION CONTINUES, BUT BEWARE SMALL, FRESHLY FORMED SNOWDRIFT

AVALANCHE DANGER

Throughout Tyrol, favourable conditions dominate. In East Tyrol above approximately 2400 m, moderate danger prevails. In lower lying areas and in North Tyrol, the danger level is low, in general. However, caution is urged towards freshly drifted steep slopes, which are to be found primarily above approximately 2400 m in areas adjacent to ridge lines. The snowdrift accumulations are not massive, but can sometimes be triggered even by minimum additional loading. With some experience in assessing avalanche hazards, these danger spots are easy to recognize. In high alpine regions (above 3000 m) in rocky northwest to north to northeast facing transition areas from little to lots of snow, isolated avalanches might be triggered by large additional loading. Full depth snowslides on steep, grassy slopes can also not be ruled out, but are currently seldom.

SNOW LAYERING

Since yesterday there has been some new snow in Tyrol. Most of it occurred in East Tyrol, at 10 - 20 cm; along the Main Alpine Ridge there was generally 10 cm, towards the north only a few centimeters. Strong winds were rare at high altitudes, but where they occurred, new snowdrift accumulations were formed which have bonded poorly with the old snowpack. The snowpack up to about 2000 m on shady slopes has surface hoar in places, in wind protected areas at all altitudes there are faceted crystals. With increasing altitude, wind crusts are more and more evident; these are sometimes capable of bearing loads, but more often are brittle. In high alpine regions there is a layer of depth hoar in the fundament from early winter, which could serve as a bed surface for slab avalanches.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Weather today: behind the weak disturbance which is now withdrawing, a high pressure front from the west will regain prominence until Friday. On the weekend, this intermediate high will weaken, next week a series of fronts will sweep across Tyrol from the west, accompanied by strong high altitude winds. Mountain weather today: backcountry skiers and freeriders first have to ascend through the residual clouds to reach the sunshine. These clouds will disperse in the course of the day. The high peaks of the northern Alps will be the first to be bathed in sunshine, and the last will be the peaks between the Ortler, Dolomites and Carnic Alps, where to begin with a few snow showers can be expected. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 9 to minus 4 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 11 to minus 7 degrees. Light winds at all altitudes.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

The favourable avalanche situation, with generally low avalanche danger, will continue through Saturday. The major hazard stems from freshly formed snowdrift accumulations.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe