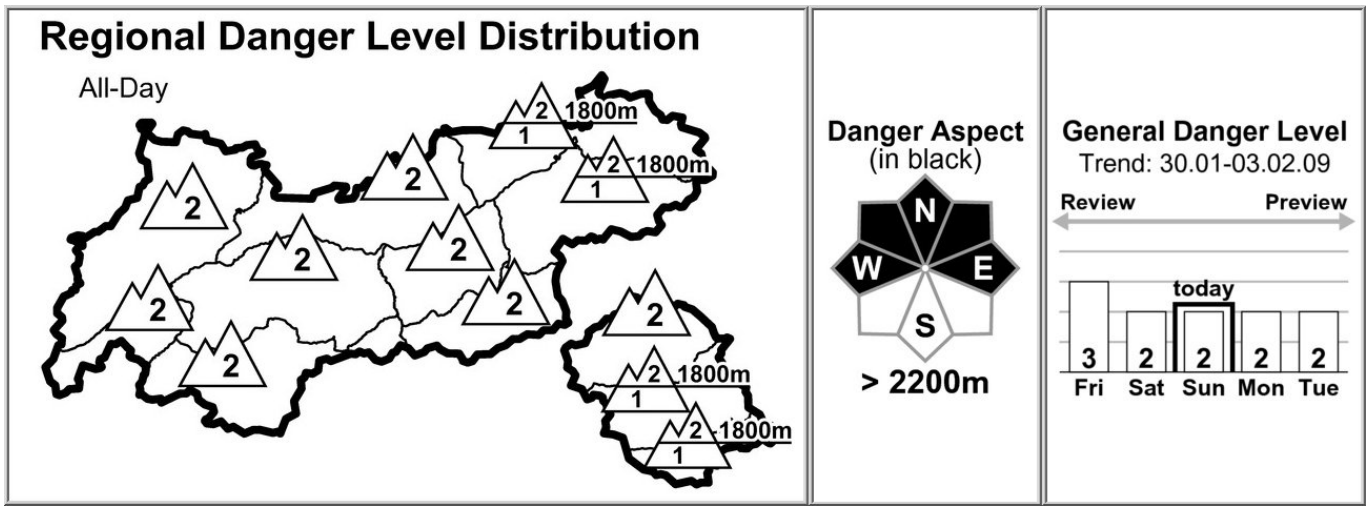
Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Sunday, 01.02.2009, at 07:30



MODERATE DANGER IN GENERAL - CAUTION STILL URGED IN RIDGE LINE AREAS AND UNFREQUENTED TERRAIN

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger in Tyrol's touring regions is generally moderate; below the treeline it is low in places. Nonetheless, backcountry skiers and freeriders are still urged to exercise caution and restraint both on routes upward and slopes downward whenever the terrain is steep. The frequency of danger spots has greatly receded since last week, and the snowpack is no longer prone to triggering; yet there are still danger spots, even within small surface areas, where in isolated cases a slab avalanche can be unleashed through minimum additional loading. This is particularly the case in west to north to east facing steep areas adjacent to ridge lines, on seldom frequented, shady slopes above approximately 2200 m, and especially in transition areas from little to lots of snow. In addition, primarily in the northern regions of North Tyrol, i.e. from the Arlberg to the eastern sector of the northern flank of the Alps, slab avalanches can be triggered on south facing slopes above approximately 2000 m with lots of snow and a gradient of less than 35°.

SNOW LAYERING

Snowpack analysis amply demonstrates that the snowfall of two weeks ago has become far more loosely packed and forfeited much of its tension. Thus, the weak layer of faceted snow crystals which was so widespread, after having formed in the long period of cold, sunny weather before 19 January, has lost much of its hazardous potential. Up to about 2200 m, thin melt freeze crusts are to be found which are now becoming thinner and thinner, below which additional faceted crystals are forming. Thus, in those regions where the melt freeze crust is particularly distinct, the proneness to triggering is somewhat increased. On extremely steep, south facing slopes, however, the melt freeze crusts are much thicker; in such cases they actually have a stabilising influence on the snowpack. This bed surface is only threatening when more bonded snow lies atop it, which is the case primarily in areas adjacent to ridge lines, in snowdrifted areas and increasingly frequently in regions south of the Inn with only little snow.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

General weather conditions: wedged between a high pressure front over Scandinavia and a low pressure front over Portugal, a southerly airstream dominates Tyrol's weather conditions today. Over the coming few days, humid air masses will be supplied to the southern flank of the Alps. Mountain weather today: along the northern flank of the Alps, strong, southerly foehn winds will prevail. Along the southern flank of the Alps it will be heavily overcast. From the south, some snowfall is expected this afternoon. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 9 to minus 4 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 15 to minus 11 degrees. Moderate to strong southwesterly winds.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Through the southerly airstream and the ever stronger southerly winds, new, trigger-sensitive snowdrift masses will be formed in northwest to north to northeast facing areas adjacent to ridge lines. Elsewhere, the moderate danger level will continue.

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