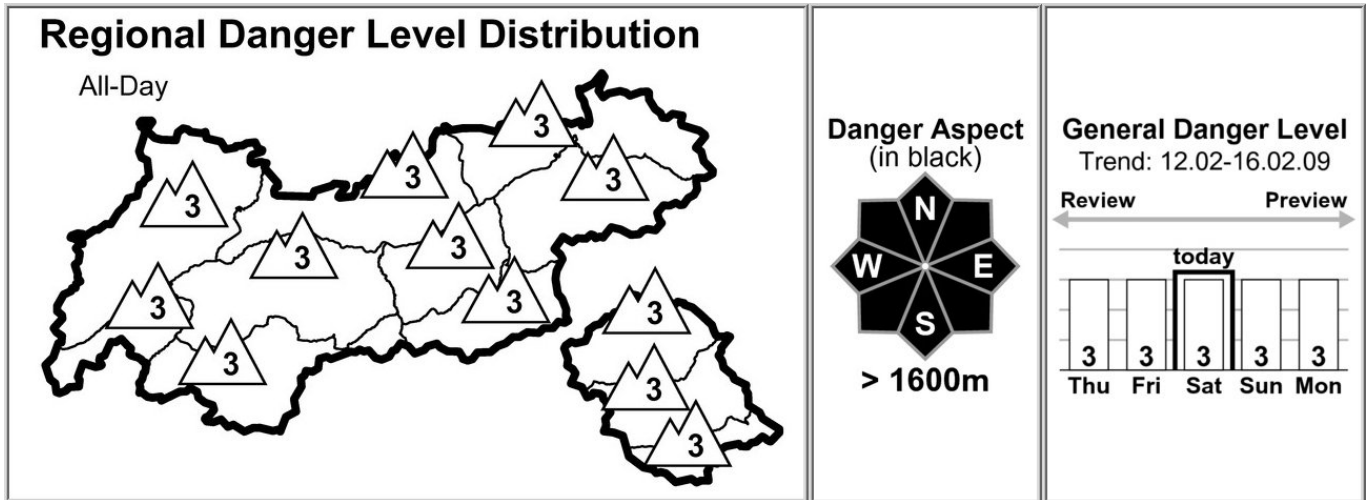


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Saturday, 14.02.2009, at 07:30



CRITICAL CONDITIONS CONTINUE FOR BACKCOUNTRY SKIERS AND FREERIDERS - CONSIDERABLE DANGER

AVALANCHE DANGER

Nothing has changed in the critical conditions for backcountry skiers and freeriders. On steep slopes, more often above 1600 m, slab avalanches can be easily unleashed in all aspects currently by minimum additional loading. Below 1600 m, this is the case in areas where wind has transported the new snow of recent days. The snowdrift accumulations which formed at the beginning of February during a southerly air current as well as those which formed during a northerly airstream are trigger sensitive. Natural avalanches are possible only in isolated cases on very steep, south facing slopes and areas adjacent to ridge lines. The conditions make great experience in the assessment of avalanche hazards as well as general caution essential, especially when traversing or descending steep slopes. In moderately steep terrain, tours are quite possible; the winter landscapes are superbly beautiful. The situation on highly frequented routes and slopes is more favourable. In northern regions with lots of new snow, caution is urged towards the freshly formed snowdrift accumulations. In areas exposed to wind influence, where the surface has become hard pressed and furrowed by the winds, conditions are better.

SNOW LAYERING

Since the beginning of February, new bed surfaces for avalanches have formed inside the snowpack. Along the Main Alpine Ridge and in East Tyrol, a layer of surface hoar is increasingly evident up to at least 2000 m which arose at the end of January. Subsequently, in regions north of the Main Alpine Ridge below about 2200 m on west to south to east facing slopes, a thin melt freeze crust formed after 6 February, beneath which a thin, faceted layer has formed. Further, there are natural bed surfaces in the form of cold new snow, redeposited in the changing wind conditions and often blanketed over by the new snowdrift. Lastly, there is still a pronounced faceted layer which formed in mid-January. All in all, there are sufficient numbers of weak layers capable of triggering avalanches...

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

General weather conditions: Tyrol is still dominated by a northerly airstream in which the northern flanks of the Alps are a barrier for cold, moist air masses. This situation will remain unchanged for awhile. On the southern flank of the Alps, northerly foehn winds are slowly gaining in strength. Mountain weather today: in the northern Alps visibility is impeded by fog and snowfall, 5 to 15 cm is expected. Along the Main Alpine Ridge the snowfall will be less and bright spells are anticipated. In the Dolomites it will be sunny, but quite windy. It is bitter cold. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 14 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 21 degrees. Moderate northerly winds, towards the east and south the winds will be stronger.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

The avalanche situation will not change significantly, to begin with.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe