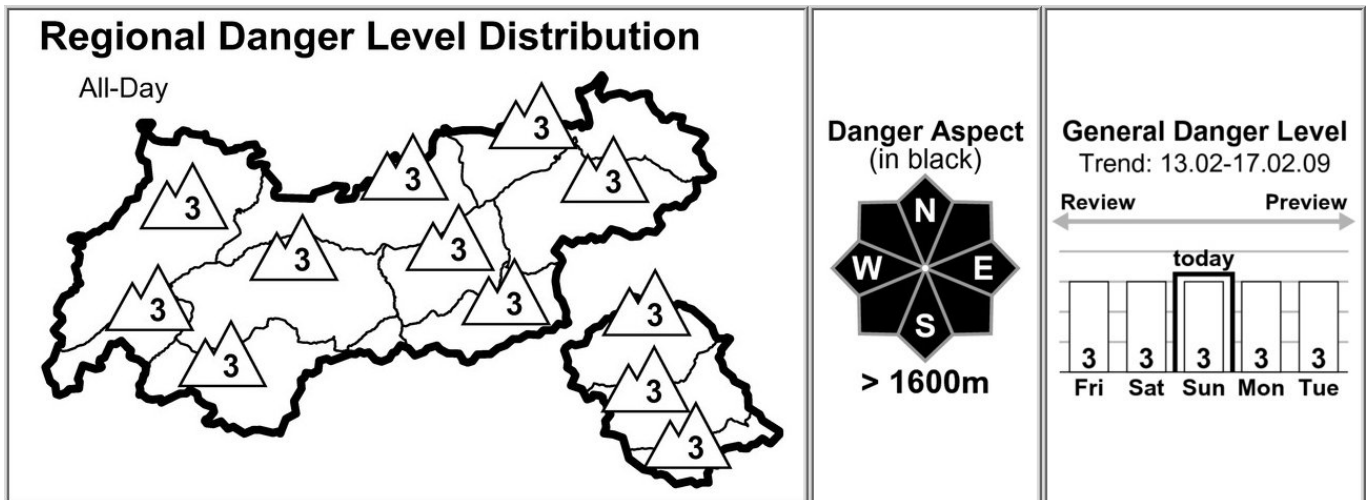


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Sunday, 15.02.2009, at 07:30



GREAT CAUTION URGED IN OUTLYING TERRAIN, CONSIDERABLE AVALANCHE DANGER

AVALANCHE DANGER

In Tyrol, critical and, what's more, highly treacherous conditions continue to prevail for backcountry skiers and freeriders, amid generally considerable avalanche danger. The situation is judged to be critical because several weak layers are currently embedded in the snowpack which can easily unleash a slab avalanche through minimum additional loading on steep slopes. Avalanches in recent days which have also involved persons, both in North and East Tyrol, amply demonstrate this. The situation is considered to be treacherous because recently formed snowdrift accumulations, particularly in North Tyrol, are now partially covered over by loosely packed newly fallen snow, which makes them difficult to recognize. Hazardous snowdrift accumulations are to be found primarily above approximately 1600 m in all aspects. Natural avalanches are easily possible, particularly on sun-bathed slopes, due to intense solar radiation. Thus, we advise all backcountry skiers and freeriders to not be tempted by the attractive weather to traverse or descend steep slopes unthinkingly. In outlying terrain away from secured ski runs, experience in assessing avalanche hazards is absolutely imperative.

SNOW LAYERING

Inside the snowpack, there are now several weak layers. Three of them formed at the beginning of February. Snowpack analysis shows that the bonding of these layers to each other is thoroughly poor, making the snowpack highly prone to triggering. Furthermore, a layer of faceted snow crystals which formed before 20 January is also still embedded in the snowpack. Whereas the wind has greatly tapered off in North Tyrol, causing the last spell of new fallen snow to be loosely deposited atop the snowpack, in East Tyrol strengthening winds are now bringing about further snowdrift accumulations.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

General weather conditions: from the west, a high pressure zone is moving closer, which will temporarily dry out the northwesterly airstream. But at the beginning of the week, the air masses will again turn moist and as of Tuesday another spate of new snow can be expected. The southern flank of the Alps will retain its favourable weather conditions. Mountain weather today: cold, but quite acceptable mountain weather, with clouds and fogbanks dispersing in the course of the day, followed by sunshine in the valleys and in high alpine regions. The fog will tend to cling to the mountain flanks in places, impeding visibility. In the southern Alps it will be sunny, but windy in places. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 16 to minus 13 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 22 to minus 17 degrees. Weak to moderate northerly winds; in high alpine regions and on the southern flank of the Alps winds will be quite brisk.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Ongoing treacherous avalanche situation for backcountry skiers and freeriders.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe