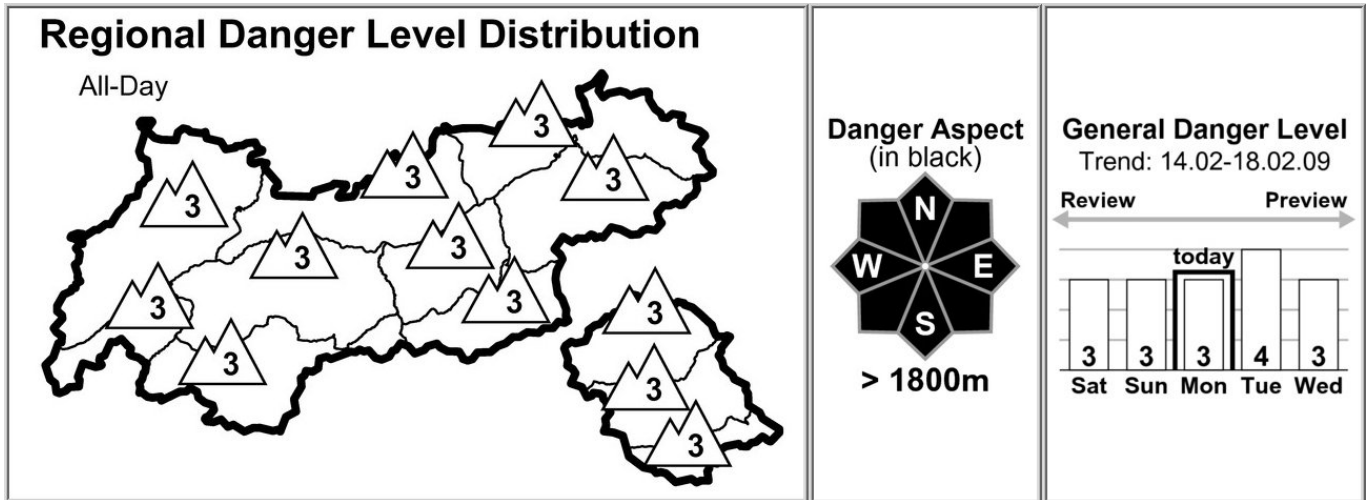


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Monday, 16.02.2009, at 07:30



UNFAVOURABLE CONDITIONS, CONSIDERABLE DANGER WIDESPREAD

AVALANCHE DANGER

In Tyrol's backcountry touring regions, unfavourable conditions dominate, with considerable danger of avalanches widespread. Avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects, particularly above approximately 1800 m. The major hazard stems from the freshly formed and older snowdrift accumulations which are often deposited atop weak layers and can be unleashed as slab avalanches by minimum additional loading. Even the weight of a single backcountry skier or freerider is sufficient to trigger one, making experience in the assessment of avalanche dangers as well as general caution when traversing or descending steep slopes advisable. The situation on highly frequented routes and slopes, where the snowpack has been consolidated, is more favourable.

SNOW LAYERING

Over the last few weeks, several trigger sensitive layers have formed inside the snowpack which serve as potential bed surfaces for avalanches: particularly along the Main Alpine Ridge and in East Tyrol, a layer of surface hoar up to about 2000 m formed towards the end of January. North of the Main Alpine Ridge, a thin melt-freeze crust is causing problems, since beneath this crust the snow crystals have become faceted, making them unbonded and very loose. This weak layer is to be found mostly on west to south to east facing slopes below about 2200 m. These various potential bed surfaces for avalanches are now blanketed over by snowdrift accumulations of varying depths and can be triggered relatively easily. The snowpack's high proneness to triggering was confirmed yesterday by the numerous avalanches.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

General weather conditions: cold air masses, in which occasional weak disturbances are embedded, continue to flow towards Tyrol from the north. On Tuesday morning, a low will traverse Tyrol and bring snowfall, which in places will be heavy. Mountain weather today: in the morning hours, the peaks (with the exception of the northern summits) will often be visible, but the clouds will still block most of the sunshine. In the Northern Alps, a bit of snow may fall towards midday. The clouds will lower their altitude in the course of the day, visibility will deteriorate. Light snowfall is expected in the afternoon. Well south of the Main Alpine Ridge, on the other hand, it will remain dry and ongoing sunshine is anticipated. Moderate northwesterly winds. Temperature at 2000 m: between minus 12 and minus 8 degrees; at 3000 m: between minus 17 and minus 15 degrees.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Due to heavy snowfall in places, continuing escalation of avalanche danger.

Rudi Mair

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe