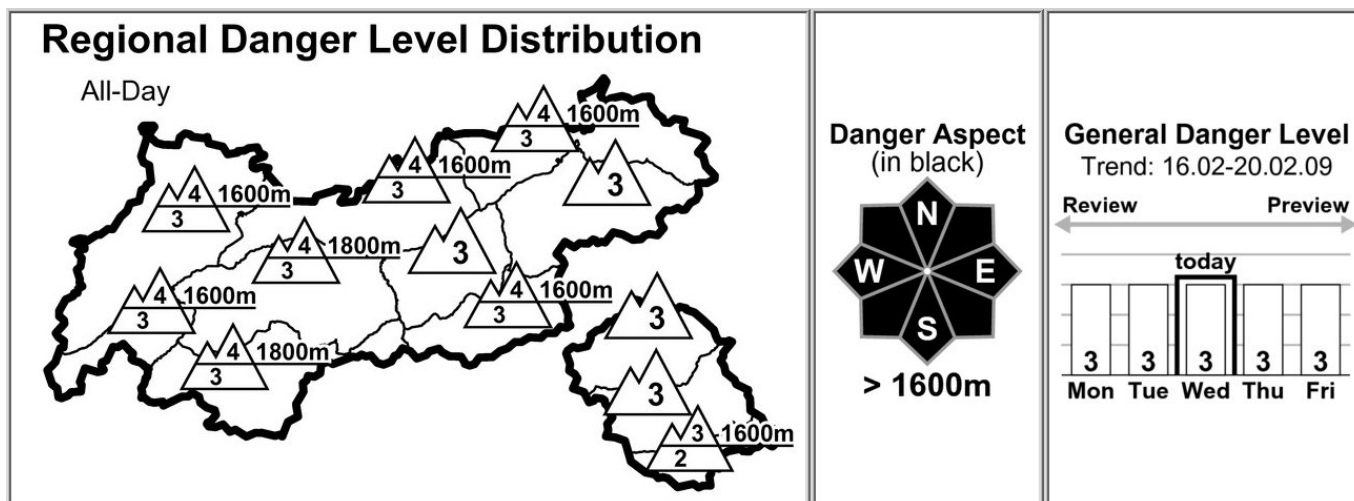


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Wednesday, 18.02.2009, at 07:30



TREACHEROUS AVALANCHE SITUATION: DANGER CONSIDERABLE WIDESPREAD, REGIONALLY EVEN HIGH

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche situation in Tyrol's backcountry touring regions remains delicate and treacherous, the danger is considerable far and wide. Moreover, in some regions, particularly where it has just snowed heavily, the danger is now assessed as high. Avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects above approximately 1600 m. Even the weight of a single backcountry skier or freerider is sufficient to unleash an avalanche. The possibilities for skiing and freeriding tours are extremely limited at the moment, and experience in assessing avalanche hazards in outlying terrain away from secured ski runs is imperative. Again today, increasingly frequent naturally triggered avalanches of medium and even large size can be expected, which can in turn place exposed parts of transportation routes and ascents to huts at risk.

SNOW LAYERING

Over the last 24 hours there has been 40 to 60 cm of new snow in the Arlberg/Ausserfern region, the Silvretta and across the Northern Alps; in the Lower Inn Valley there was 30 to 50 cm. But even along the Main Alpine Ridge and in northern East Tyrol, 30 to 40 cm of snow has fallen; further south there was less. The snowfall was accompanied by strong northwesterly winds which have led to huge amounts of snowdrifting above the treeline in particular. New snow and snowdrift now blanket over an old snowpack containing a number of trigger sensitive layers which could serve as bed surfaces for avalanches. And finally, even the bonding of the fresh snowdrift accumulations with the old snowpack is generally weak, increasing the likelihood of avalanches from that aspect as well.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

General weather conditions: the low pressure zone has moved in an easterly/southeasterly direction, an intermediate high pressure zone will dominate in Vorarlberg today. However, at high altitudes extremely cold air masses will continue to flow towards Tyrol from the north for the next few days. In spite of sunshine, temperatures will remain low. Mountain weather today: in the Northern Alps, there has been heavy snowfall. The icy cold arctic air masses and the clear nighttime skies guarantee a very cold morning in the mountains. In addition, the winds primarily in ridge areas can be brisk, especially on the southern flank of the Alps. Due to the extreme cold, the avalanche situation remains unchanged: thus, great heed must be paid to the current avalanche bulletin. Temperature at 2000 m: between minus 19 and minus 13 degrees; at 3000 m: between minus 22 and minus 17 degrees. In the morning hours, hefty and extremely cold northeasterly winds, in the afternoon they will slacken off and be moderate-to-light in strength.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

The avalanche danger will subside only gradually and incrementally.

Rudi Mair

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe