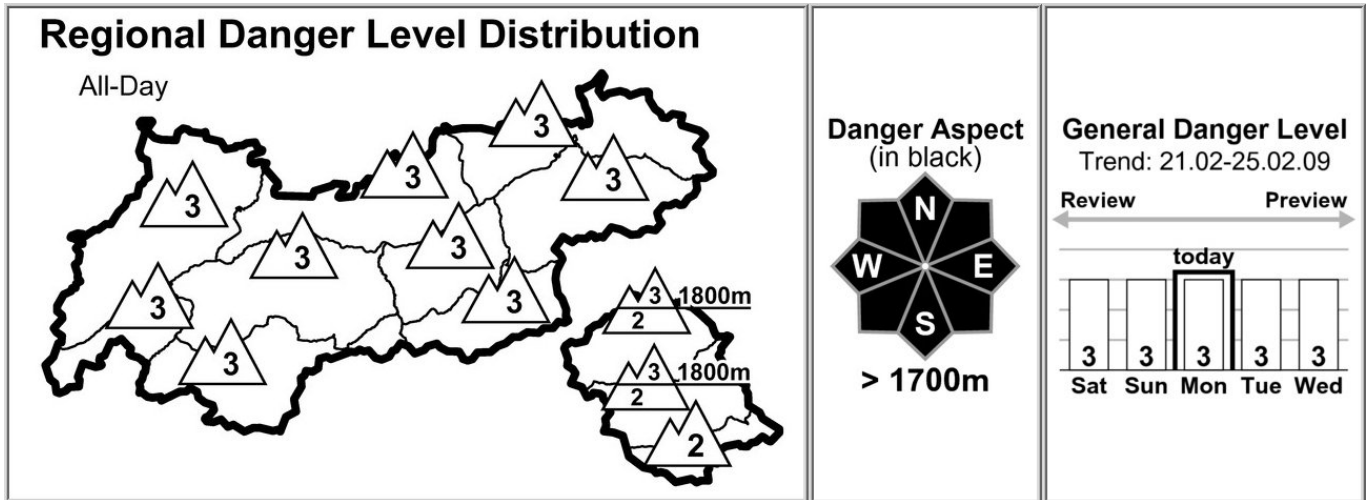


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Monday, 23.02.2009, at 07:30



NEW SNOW AND WIND KEEP AVALANCHE SITUATION TENSE

AVALANCHE DANGER

In North Tyrol the avalanche danger is considerable widespread. The hazards are most critical in those regions which had the heaviest recent snowfall, i.e. the Northern Alps and the Kitzbühel Alps, where new snow is expected again today. In some areas below about 700 m it will rain; in case rainfall is heavy, natural avalanches of loosely packed snow as well as isolated slab avalanches can be expected. The slab avalanches can fracture down to the lowermost layers of the snowpack and thus, reach exposed parts of transportation routes in isolated cases. The situation for backcountry skiers and freeriders remains rather critical. Caution is urged on steep slopes in all aspects, especially above approximately 1700 m. Avalanches are most easily triggered in steep transition areas from little to lots of snow. The situation on highly frequented routes and slopes, as well as in southern East Tyrol, is more favourable.

SNOW LAYERING

Recent precipitation brought the most snow to the Lower Inn Valley, currently 20 cm, whereas it snowed maximum 5 cm in Tyrol's other regions. The snowpack has been able to settle and consolidate quite adequately over the last few days, due to higher temperatures; however, rain could well weaken it anew. At intermediate and higher altitudes, there are still several weak layers inside the snowpack in all aspects, consisting generally of faceted, loosely packed snow crystals. These are the layers responsible for the avalanche accidents of recent days. Only above approximately 2800 m is the layering of the snowpack more favourable. At those altitudes, caution is urged towards the freshly formed snowdrift accumulations.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

General weather conditions: wedged between a low over the Baltic Sea and a high over the Eastern Atlantic, a northwesterly air current prevails in the Alps. On Wednesday and Thursday a high pressure front will dominate temporarily. Mountain weather today: on the northern flank of the Alps and on the Main Alpine Ridge, clouds and snowfall. In the northern mountains which act as a barrier, between 15 and 25 cm of new snow is expected. In the Dolomites to the Carnic Alps, it will remain dry and quite sunny. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 7 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 14 degrees. Strong northwesterly winds.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

No significant change in the avalanche situation. At lower altitudes, the snowpack is gradually stabilising.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe