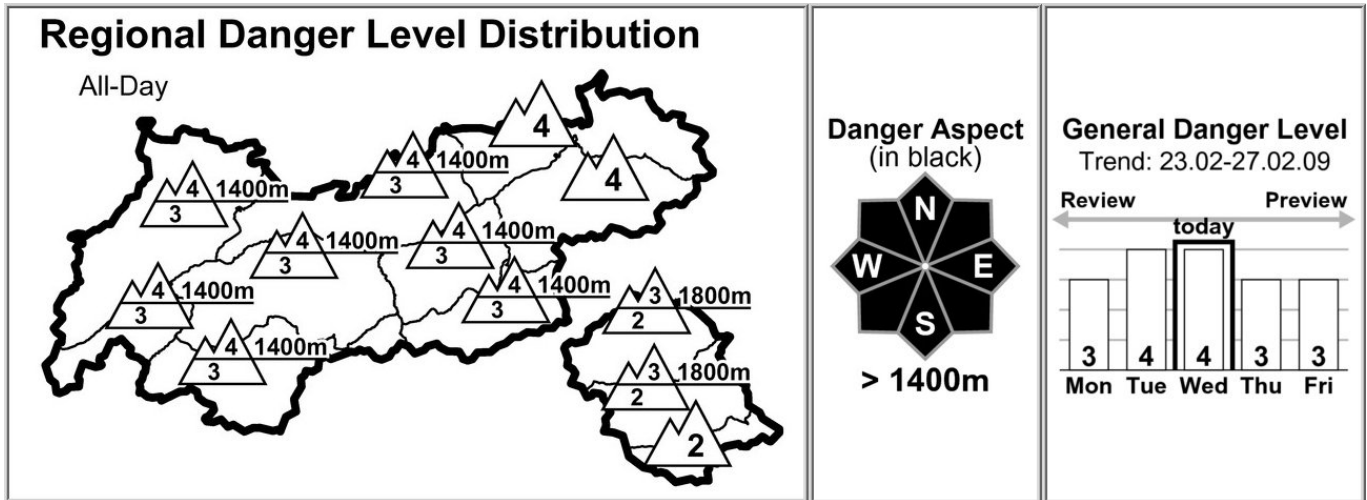


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Wednesday, 25.02.2009, at 07:30



NUMEROUS NATURAL AVALANCHES EXPECTED DUE TO SOLAR RADIATION AND DAYTIME WARMING CYCLE

AVALANCHE DANGER

In the early morning, considerable avalanche danger temporarily prevails in Tyrol. The danger level is expected to quickly increase to "high" above 1400 meters as of the first rays of sunshine and the daytime warming. Numerous loosely packed natural avalanches and slab avalanches are then expected on steep slopes which, depending on the progress of the sun, will begin on east facing slopes, then occur more frequently on south facing slopes, and later on in the day on west facing slopes. To begin with, this will be the case primarily on very steep slopes adjacent to ridge lines and in wind protected areas below rock walls. At lower altitudes, below about 2000 m, where fog is more persistent, shady slopes can also lose their firmness through diffuse sunlight, which can, in turn, lead to large sized avalanches being fractured. This can be expected primarily in regions with lots of snow in the Lower Inn Valley, i.e. the Northern Alps and the Kitzbühel Alps. In general, avalanches place exposed parts of transportation routes at risk today. The situation in the regions of the southern Ötztal and Stubai Alps which had only light snowfall is somewhat more favourable. Backcountry skiers and freeriders in North Tyrol absolutely need great experience in assessing avalanche hazards in outlying terrain away from secured ski runs. The situation in East Tyrol is significantly better. In the northern regions of East Tyrol above 1800 m, considerable danger prevails, below that altitude the danger is moderate. Further to the south, the danger level is moderate in general.

SNOW LAYERING

It has snowed once again in North Tyrol. Most of the new snow fell in the Lower Inn Valley, up to 40 cm. Elsewhere, there was generally 10 - 30 cm of new snow. Towards the end of the precipitation, only light winds were blowing. Thus, predominantly loosely packed snow has now blanketed a snowpack which was itself heavily impacted by winds. The most critical weak layer in the snowpack is currently to be found below about 2300 m in the form of a loosely packed, faceted layer which, furthermore, is full of air spaces. This layer formed in the period of sunny weather before 19 January; its bonding to the layers lying atop it is very poor, making it highly prone to triggering. An additional weak spot is the layer of faceted snow crystals which took shape after 6 February, especially to the north of the Main Alpine Ridge in the southern sector up to approximately 2600 m; on east to south to west facing slopes, up to approximately 2200 m. And last but not least, freshly formed snowdrift accumulations can still be easily disturbed and unleashed, even at higher altitudes.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

General weather conditions: the moist air masses which have flowed towards the Alps have been cut off, an interim high pressure zone temporarily dominates Tyrolean weather today. Tomorrow, the northwesterly airstream will regain in strength, on Friday the next weather disturbance can be expected. Mountain weather today: above the high fog there will be morning sunshine, quite thin, high altitude clouds will be above the summits this afternoon. Temperatures will increase slightly and the winds are expected to slacken off. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 13 to minus 6 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 16 to minus 9 degrees. Light to moderate northerly to northeasterly winds.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

The zenith of avalanche frequency will be reached today.

