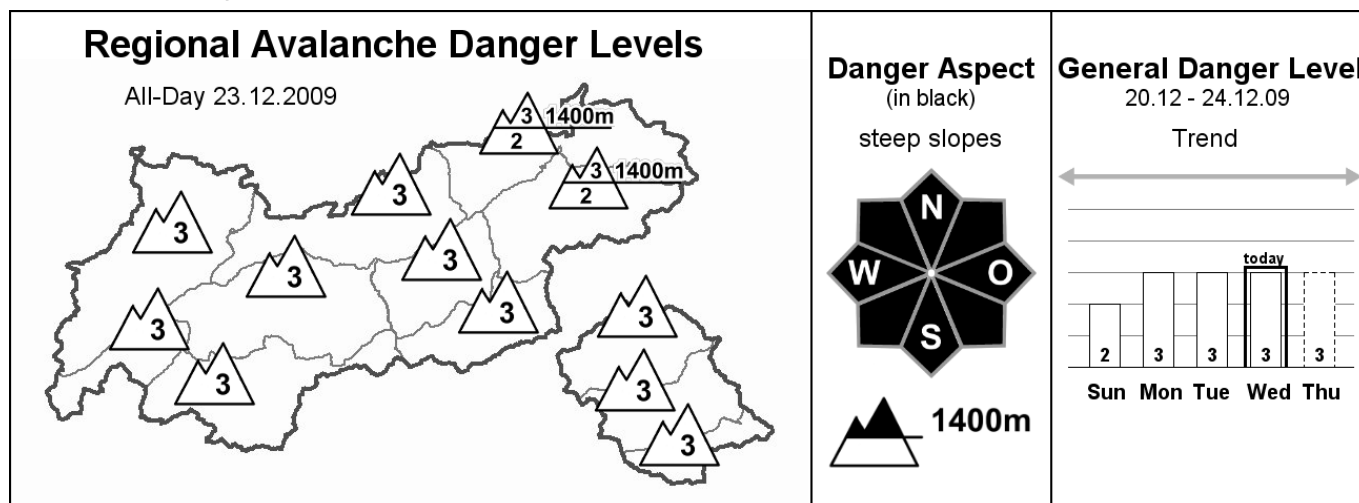


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Wednesday, 23.12.2009, at 07:30



Treacherous avalanche situation continues for backcountry ski tours

AVALANCHE DANGER

In Tyrol, considerable avalanche danger reigns widespread; in fact, the situation must be described as critical and treacherous. This is corroborated demonstratively by numerous avalanches which have been triggered involving persons in the last few days, as well as naturally triggered avalanches, especially from steep areas adjacent to ridge lines. Avalanches can also be triggered by backcountry ski tourers and freeriders today, even in moderately steep terrain. The anticipated size of the avalanches is larger than at the beginning of the week, due to the ongoing strong winds and the enormous snow transport which they are causing. Avalanche prone locations are to be found in all expositions, particularly on northwest to north to southeast facing slopes. Isolated naturally triggered avalanches can again be expected today in very steep starting zones adjacent to ridge lines which are subject to wind. This is particularly the case for East Tyrol, where the snowdrift accumulations are more extensive, due to the freshly fallen snow. In regions which have had rainfall, full depth snowslides are also quite possible, especially in East Tyrol. In low lying areas with little snow, the situation tends to be more favourable.

SNOW LAYERING

In East Tyrol last night there was 10 to 30 cm of snowfall, most of which fell in southern East Tyrol. In North Tyrol there was a maximum of 10 cm of snowfall. Strong winds continue to whip across the peaks, transporting huge masses of snow. The bonding of the snowdrift masses to the old snowpack is poor everywhere in Tyrol, since the old snow surface is often blanketed with surface hoar, loosely packed snowdrift and faceted crystals which were the results of the long period of low temperatures. The snow is currently distributed in extremely irregular fashion; the same applies to the snowpack itself, which is hard in some places. A hard snowpack surface often gives the illusion of safety - but is not at all safe.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Strong winds and snow showers in the mountains, particularly during the morning hours. This afternoon the weather conditions will improve for a brief interim. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 3 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 8 degrees. Moderate to strong southwesterly to westerly winds.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Unfortunately, the situation remains critical, especially for backcountry ski tourers.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe