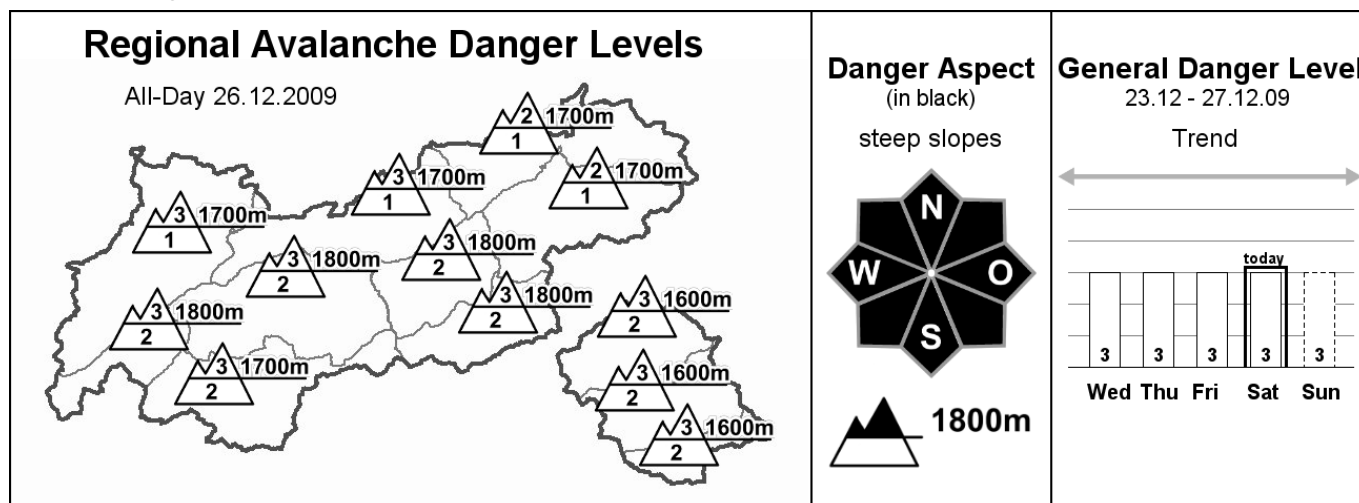


# Avalanche Bulletin

## of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Saturday, 26.12.2009, at 07:30



### An appeal to backcountry skiers: utmost caution and restraint in steep terrain above 1800 m!

#### AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche situation is still highly critical for backcountry skiers and freeriders in most parts of Tyrol, amidst considerable danger. The first day of pleasant, sunny weather following a period of stormy winds always portends many accidents. Avalanche prone locations are to be found in fresh and older snowdrift accumulations which have formed in all expositions since the beginning of the week through the constantly rotating winds. These are increasingly evident in gullies and bowls, as well as in steep areas adjacent to ridge lines. With increasing altitude, they become more and more prone to triggering. In areas exposed to strong winds in high alpine regions, the trigger sensitivity is somewhat diminished due to the generally quite hard wind pressed crusts. However, in transitions from shallow to deep snowpack, such hard pressed crusts can be triggered by minimum additional loading. Particularly in regions with lots of freshly fallen snow, i.e. in the southern Ötztal and Stubai Alps as well as in East Tyrol, assessing avalanche perils is made much more difficult by the fresh snow, since it often renders older snowdrift accumulations impossible to recognize. Since the snowfall tapered off yesterday evening, naturally triggered avalanches are no longer likely. But on steep grassy slopes, full depth snowslides cannot be excluded, especially in East Tyrol. Thus, backcountry skiers and freeriders who leave secured ski slopes for outlying terrain today must have extensive experience and detailed knowledge of reading and assessing avalanche dangers. The situation below about 1800 m is more favourable, due to the higher temperatures; in some places the danger is low.

#### SNOW LAYERING

Over the last 24 hours there has been heavy snowfall in some parts of the southern regions of Tyrol. The East Tyrol Dolomites and southern Ötztal Alps received the most, with 30 cm, locally as much as 50 cm. The wind shifted to northerly, which transported great snow masses and led to windblown steep slopes as well. The bonding of the snowdrift masses which have been deposited since the beginning of the week to the old snowpack surface, particularly above approximately 1800 m, is still very poor and worsens with increasing altitude. The widespread surface hoar and/or the loosely packed, faceted crystals could serve as a bed surface for avalanches. Snowpack analysis, settling noises and naturally triggered avalanches have amply demonstrated this.

#### ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Visibility from the summits is excellent, to begin with, although the light will become more diffuse this afternoon in regions south of the Main Alpine Ridge. Temperatures are rising at all altitudes. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 11 to minus 2 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 13 to minus 7 degrees. Light to moderate northwesterly winds, later shifting to southerly, this evening shifting to westerly.

#### SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

No significant change in the critical avalanche situation for backcountry skiers, especially at higher altitudes.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe