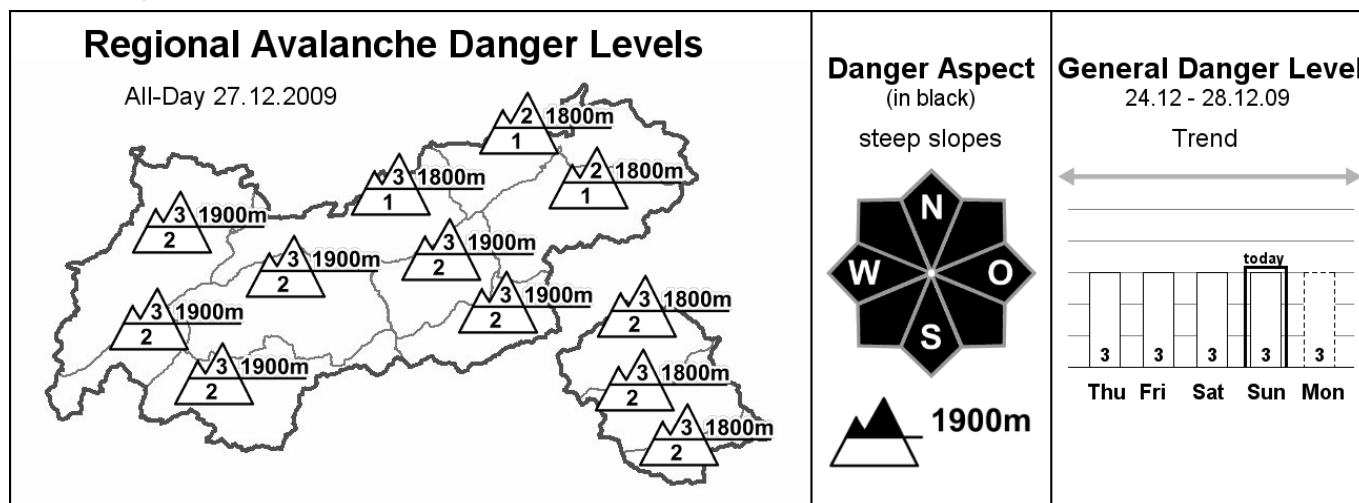


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Sunday, 27.12.2009, at 07:30



Considerable avalanche danger in general above 1900 m

AVALANCHE DANGER

In large parts of Tyrol the avalanche danger is contingent upon altitude: above approximately 1900 m, it is still considerable; below that altitude it is moderate; in northeastern regions of North Tyrol with little snow, the danger below the treeline is low. Avalanche prone locations for backcountry skiers are to be found in older snowdrift accumulations which formed a week ago, on the one hand. On the other, particularly in the southern regions which received lots of snow, i.e. Ötztal and Stubai Alps, Zillertal Alps and East Tyrol, from the new snowdrift accumulations which have been forming since day before yesterday. This fresh snowdrift is found especially in areas adjacent to ridge lines on northeast to east to south facing slopes. Older snowdrift accumulations are still to be found in all expositions; above approximately 1800 m, they can be triggered even by minimum additional loading. The likelihood of triggering increases with rising altitude; up to about 2200 m, the likelihood also depends on the thickness of the melt-freeze crust which formed on 25.12: the thicker it is, the lesser the avalanche peril. A situation persists in which utmost caution and restraint are imperative in steep terrain.

SNOW LAYERING

The short period of rain on 25.12 is easily recognized throughout Tyrol. It formed a melt-freeze crust up to 3 cm thick, up to approximately 1800 m, in some places up to 2300 m, which is helping to stabilize the snowpack. Atop the melt-freeze crust, new fallen snow is deposited, sometimes accompanied by freshly formed snowdrift accumulations. Beneath the melt-freeze crust, the snowpack is moist or wet at low and intermediate altitudes. Slab avalanches can currently be triggered in the borders between the loosely packed and newly fallen layers of the snowpack, but the probability is greater that they will be released inside the old snowpack, which consists of loosely packed, faceted snow crystals, at whose edges surface hoar is often evident. Snowpack analysis continues to show that the bonding of old snow to snowdrift deposited on top of it is generally poor. This has been amply demonstrated by avalanches involving people over the last few days.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Frosty temperatures in the mountains; in exposed terrain the winds can also be unpleasantly strong. The cloudbanks are above the summits, visibility is thus quite good. Not until tonight will fog move into the northern Alps, with a bit of precipitation in isolated cases. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 6 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 12 degrees. Moderate to strong northwesterly winds.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

As winds become stronger, new snowdrift masses can be expected.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe