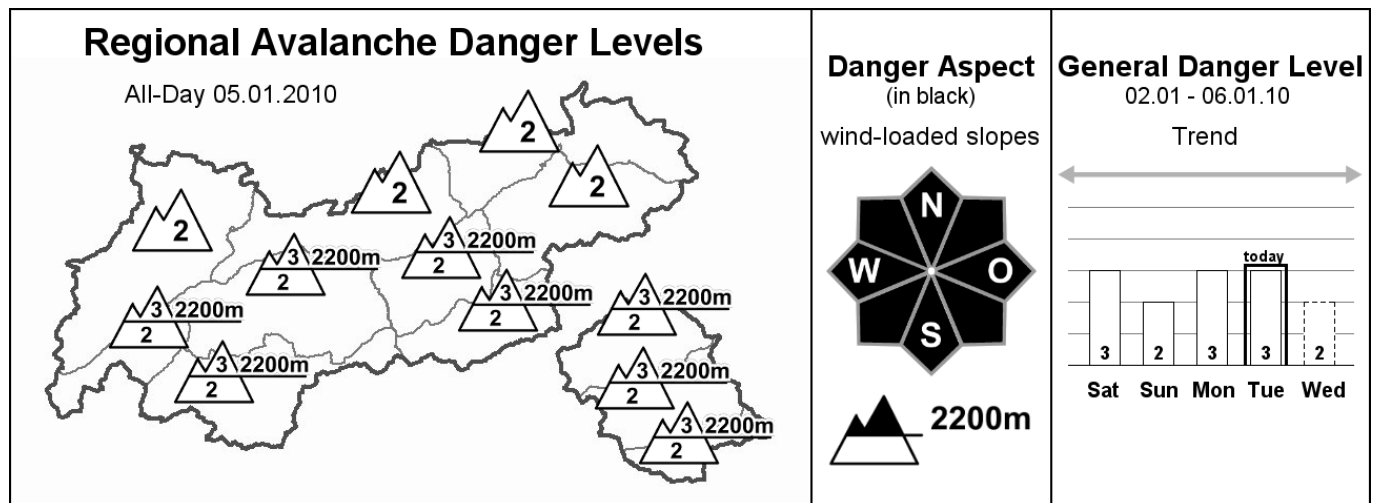


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Tuesday, 05.01.2010, at 07:30



Beware fresh snowdrift above the treeline

AVALANCHE DANGER

By and large in Tyrol, the avalanche situation still depends on altitude. Above about 2200 m, the peril is still considerable in places. Below that altitude, the hazards are moderate. In wind protected areas below the treeline, the danger is low. Today, caution is urged primarily towards snowdrift accumulations which have formed over the last few days. They are still trigger sensitive and can be released even by the weight of a single backcountry skier or freerider, as has been amply demonstrated by several recent avalanches involving people. With experience in reading and assessing the avalanche situation, such avalanche prone locations can easily be recognized. The depth of fractures is usually not great. The frequency of such danger zones, particularly behind breaks in terrain and in gullies and bowls, increases with ascending altitude. In addition, the old snowpack above approximately 2300 m, particularly in very steep west to north to east facing transition areas from shallow to deep snow, is prone to triggering, although large additional loading is generally required to release an avalanche.

SNOW LAYERING

Snow depths in Tyrol are below average for the season at low altitudes. At intermediate and high altitudes, snow depths are average. The snowpack is distributed in extremely irregular fashion; moreover, it is characterized by many layers of varying hardness, especially up to approximately 2500 m, in East Tyrol up to 2700 m in places, where the warm weather phases created melt freeze crusts in the snowpack. The dominant factor in the current snow layering is the snowdrift, which is generally deposited atop a layer of loosely packed snow, which in turn lies on top of a hard melt-freeze crust. The trigger sensitivity has now subsided somewhat, but is still high enough for an avalanche to be released by a single backcountry skier or freerider. Above approximately 2300 m, in addition, a loosely packed, faceted layer of snow crystals in the snowpack could also serve as a bed surface for avalanches.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Mountain weather today: sunny and dry with good visibility on the Main Alpine Ridge and north thereof. South of the Main Alpine Ridge, visibility will soon deteriorate as high altitude clouds move in, which will reach the Northern Alps by evening. No significant temperature changes are expected. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 6 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 13 degrees. Moderate, intermittently brisk southwesterly winds.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Amidst increasing wind velocity, small snowdrift accumulations will form

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe