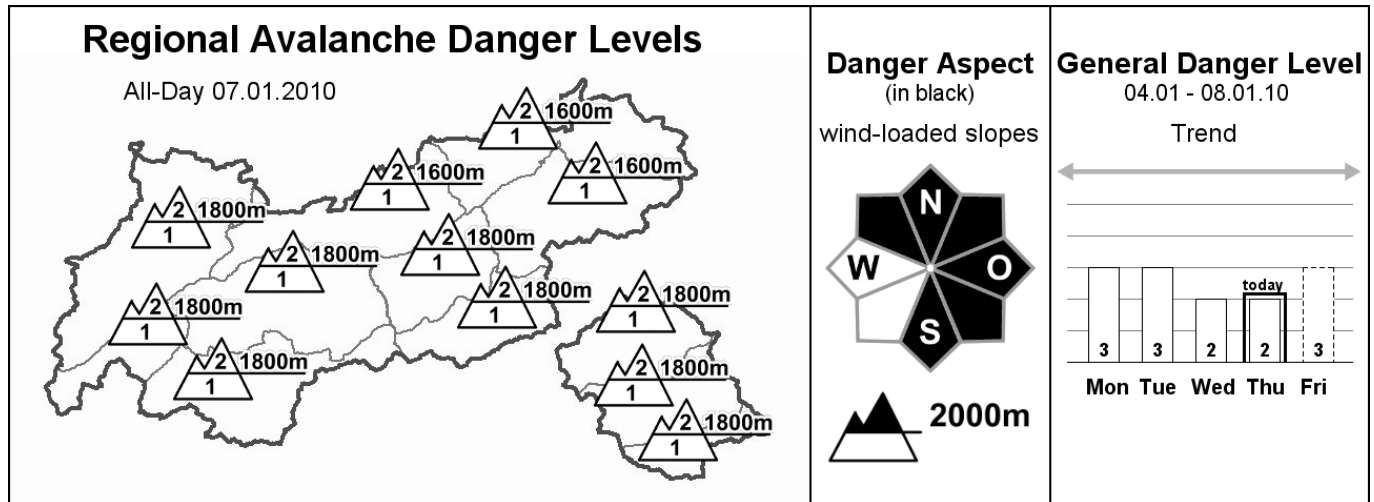


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Thursday, 07.01.2010, at 07:30



Beware snowdrift near the surface!

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger continues to be contingent on altitude: below the treeline it is low widespread, above the treeline it is now moderate in all regions. Avalanche prone locations for backcountry skiers and freeriders are to be found in snowdrift accumulations which formed last Saturday. Currently, in addition, new, small sized snowdrift masses are forming in areas adjacent to ridge lines. On the one hand, tensions inside the snowpack have decreased due to the cold; on the other, wherever deep snowdrift accumulations have formed, they can still trigger avalanches in steep terrain, in isolated cases even through minimum additional loading. Such danger zones are increasingly found behind breaks in the terrain and in very steep gullies and bowls. The small amount of new fallen snow makes it more difficult to recognize this snowdrift, which was easy to spot yesterday. Above approximately 2300 m, particularly in transitions from shallow to deep snow in steep terrain, the old snowpack can be released by large additional loading.

SNOW LAYERING

Last night it snowed a bit in most of Tyrol. This has blanketed over the weak layer of surface hoar which had formed in southern regions. Nonetheless, the dominant danger factor remains the snowdrift accumulations which formed last Saturday. These are predominantly above 2300 m, in northern East Tyrol above 2700 in many areas, and have been deposited atop a softer layer of feltlike crystals, which in turn lie on top of a hard melt-freeze crust. The bonding is often inadequate, making avalanches possible. At low and intermediate altitudes, the snowpack manifests an alternating sequence of thin, hard, loosely packed and soft layers. Above approximately 2300 m, a layer of faceted crystals near the ground with thicker, harder layers atop is increasingly a potential bed surface for avalanches.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Mountain weather today: the snow flurries will taper off, the clouds and fog will disperse, a bit of sunshine is likely in the Northern Alps. The visibility will be quite diffuse and towards evening new cloudbanks will move in from the south. It will remain wintry cold. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 11 to minus 7 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 17 to minus 14 degrees. Light westerly to southwesterly winds, of moderate velocity near the ridge lines and summits.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

In areas adjacent to ridge lines, new snowdrift is forming which is very trigger sensitive. Tomorrow avalanche danger will escalate significantly on the southern flank in particular, amidst snowfall and wind.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe