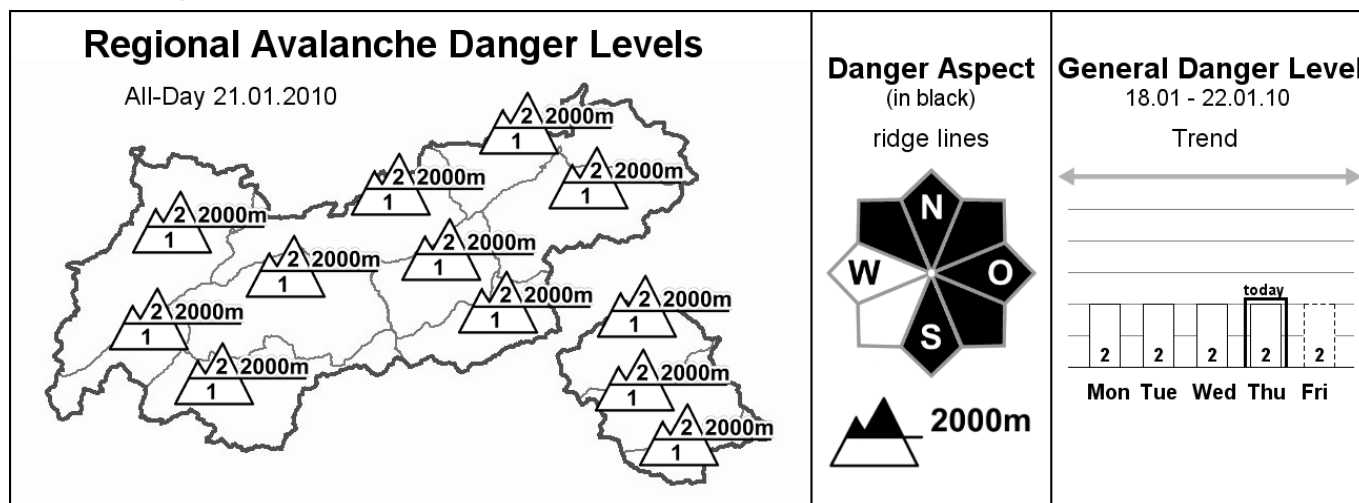


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Thursday, 21.01.2010, at 07:30



Quite favourable conditions, apart from fresh snowdrift near ridge lines

AVALANCHE DANGER

Generally favourable touring conditions prevail far and wide. The avalanche danger continues to depend on altitude: above approximately 2000 m the danger level is moderate, below that level it is low. Recently formed, usually small sized snowdrift accumulations still require the utmost caution; they are found in northwest to northeast to south facing steep terrain adjacent to ridge lines in particular, as well as behind breaks in the terrain. The northerly winds will be stronger today, which will lead to new danger zones forming in south facing areas near ridge lines in particular, where avalanches can be released even through minimum additional loading. The benefit: recently drifted areas are blanketed by a thin covering of new fallen snow at most, so can easily be recognized by experienced skiers. With increasing altitude, the old snowpack becomes more trigger sensitive; this is also the case in transition areas from shallow to deep snow, especially in extremely steep terrain. Avalanches generally require large additional loading in these spots. Hard snow areas which sound hollow should be avoided whenever possible.

SNOW LAYERING

The internal tensions of the snowpack continue to diminish. Thus, recently formed snowdrift requires the greatest caution, since beneath it often lies loosely packed, faceted old snow, with which the bonding is often quite poor. The snowpack has a sequence of loosely packed, faceted crystals and thin melt freeze crusts, at higher altitudes also wind pressed crusts. On the surface in steep, sun bathed zones, especially below about 2000 m, a thin melt freeze crust has formed. At higher altitudes, a loose layer of depth hoar from the onset of winter could provide a bed surface for avalanches in isolated cases.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Higher altitude mountain regions are often shrouded in clouds and fog, with occasional snowfall. The new fallen snow will not amount to much, rarely more than 5 cm. It remains wintery cold and, at high altitudes, windy. The southern flank of the Alps boasts more attractive conditions today, with sunshine and better visibility. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 7 degrees; at 3000: minus 14 degrees. Moderate westerly to northwesterly winds, at high altitudes the winds will be stronger.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

New snowdrift accumulations are expected to form near ridge lines today.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe