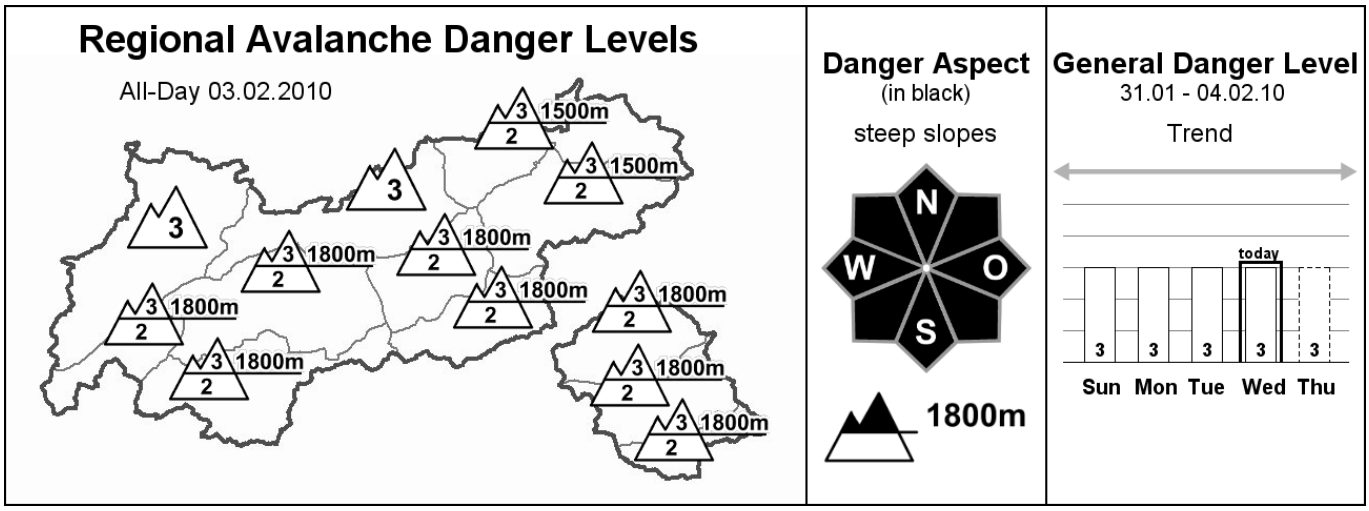
Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol
Wednesday, 03.02.2010, at 07:30



Increasingly treacherous avalanche situation for backcountry skiers and freeriders

---

AVALANCHE DANGER

In the northwestern regions of Tyrol, from Arlberg-Ausserfern to the western Northern Alps, considerable avalanche danger generally prevails. In the remaining regions, the danger is considerable above the treeline; below the treeline the danger is generally moderate, although this depends utterly on the current wind influence. Particularly in steep, wind-influenced and sparsely wooded forest areas, even minimum additional loading can trigger a slab avalanche. In general, freshly formed snowdrift accumulations are highly prone to triggering. In steep terrain, even minimum additional loading can release slab avalanches. As the winds shift to southerly, the frequency of avalanche prone locations will continue to increase with ascending altitude. They are found especially in northwest to east to south facing areas adjacent to ridge lines. As temperatures rise, the likelihood of slab avalanches being triggered will increase slightly. From very steep areas near ridge lines, naturally triggered avalanches are also possible in isolated cases. At lower altitudes which have had a lot of rain, small, wet sluffs can be released. Extensive experience in spotting and assessing avalanche perils in outlying terrain away from secured ski runs is imperative; what's more, steep, snowdrifted slopes should be avoided under all circumstances. The situation is currently more favourable only in terrain which has been skied upon all winter long.

SNOW LAYERING

In the northwestern regions of Tyrol, it is now beginning to snow more heavily. Throughout Tyrol, stormy southerly to westerly to northwesterly winds are blowing, causing new snowdrift accumulations to form far and wide. The bonding of the snowdrifted masses which have formed since Thursday to the old snowpack surface is quite poor widespread. The reason: the old snowpack surface, before being drifted over, consisted of very light new fallen snow, of surface hoar, and in northern regions up to about 1800 m of a thin ice lense or else of faceted, loosely packed crystals. The high degree of trigger sensitivity has been confirmed by all the snow examinations and analyses over recent days, as well as by avalanches which have caught people in their wake. The distribution of snow is highly irregular, due to winds.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Extremely unpleasant conditions in the mountains, with winds persistently strong to stormy. Moreover, visibility is poor and snowfall expected to continue, most of it in the Northern Alps. The fresh-fallen snow will be massively transported by the wind. The southern flank of the Alps is more pleasant, although windy as well. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 5 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 11 degrees. Strong to stormy winds at high altitudes.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Through rising temperatures and improvement in weather conditions forecast for tomorrow, naturally triggered avalanches will be more frequent.

Patrick Nairz **Translated by Jeffrey McCabe**

freephone: +43(0)800 800 503 +43(0)512 581839 503 lawine@tirol.gv.at www.lawine.at/tirol