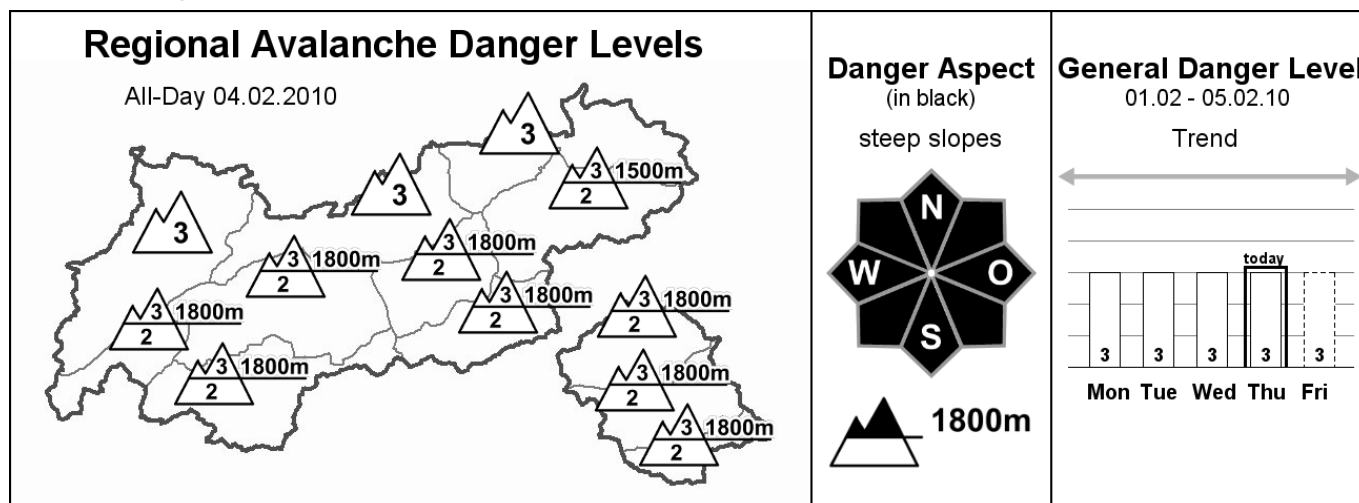


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Thursday, 04.02.2010, at 07:30



Natural avalanches possible this afternoon on extremely steep, sunny slopes

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche situation is quite treacherous for backcountry skiers and freeriders. In the Arlberg-Ausserfern region and in the Northern Alps, considerable danger generally prevails. Further to the south, the danger below the treeline is predominantly moderate. But beware: even in sparsely wooded, steep forests which were exposed to wind influence last week, avalanches can be triggered today by minimum additional loading. In general, backcountry skiers and freeriders can easily release avalanches in steep terrain. For that reason, we advise the exercise of great caution and restraint both when ascending and when descending steep slopes. Whoever is in outlying terrain away from secured ski slopes must have extensive experience in spotting and assessing avalanche perils. This afternoon, due to anticipated solar radiation, natural avalanches are also possible in extremely steep, wind protected terrain. The avalanches are usually medium sized, but can in isolated cases even place exposed transportation routes at risk.

SNOW LAYERING

Over the last 24 hours it has snowed widespread in Tyrol, except in southern East Tyrol. Most snowfall fell in the Arlberg and Ausserfern regions, and in the eastern part of the Northern Alps, locally up to 35 cm. Generally there was 10 to 20 cm of fresh fallen snow, further to the south about 5 cm. The strong winds again transported snow masses far and wide. All the snowdrift accumulations which have formed over the last week are poorly bonded with the old snowpack, which generally consists of loosely packed crystals. Before the latest bout of snowfall and snowdrifting, the snowpack consisted widespread of faceted crystals which were very loose, also of surface hoar, very light new fallen snow and, in the northern regions up to approximately 1800 m, a thin ice lense. The marked rise in temperatures since yesterday further weakens the snowpack, and thus, in combination with the solar radiation, increases the trigger sensitivity of the snowpack.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Lots of sunshine today: the high altitude cloudbanks are way above the summits, they will become more dense this afternoon, but not impede the sun overly. Rising temperatures at all altitudes, the freezing level is at 2200 m, winds can be strong in areas exposed to foehn influence, thus accelerating the temperature increase. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 5 to plus 1 degree; at 3000 m: minus 8 to minus 4 degrees. Moderate to strong southwesterly winds.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

The danger of naturally triggered avalanches will cease, to begin with, as of this evening. Ongoing critical conditions for backcountry skiers and freeriders.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe