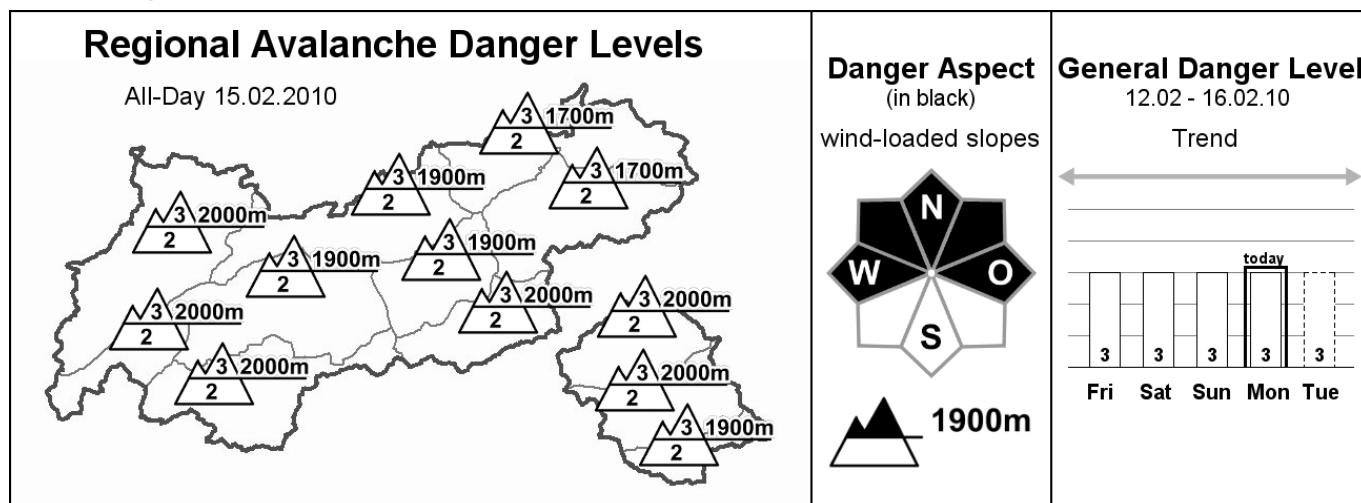


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Monday, 15.02.2010, at 07:30



Still treacherous avalanche situation at intermediate and high altitudes in places

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger remains contingent on altitude. In the Lower Inn Valley considerable danger prevails above approximately 1700 m, elsewhere generally above 1900 m, along the Main Alpine Ridge, above 2000 m. The avalanche prone locations are slowly becoming less frequent, but are transferring the danger zones to west to north to east facing slopes. In these expositions, particularly above the indicated altitudes, slab avalanches can still be triggered by minimum additional loading. Snowdrift accumulations which have formed since the end of January are currently widely spread; they are covered and concealed by a blanket of more recently fallen snow, thus making it very difficult even for experienced backcountry skiers and freeriders to assess the danger. Caution in very steep, sparsely wooded sections of forests, which appear deceptively safe, but are not. In very steep, sun bathed terrain, ever greater additional loading is required to release a slab avalanche. The situation is generally more favourable wherever the terrain has been traversed or used for descents all winter long.

SNOW LAYERING

The snow layering at intermediate and high altitudes continues to be unfavourable. All snow profiles which have been examined and analysed over the last week still show a loosely packed, faceted old snowpack, quite often interspersed with thin melt freeze crusts. Particularly in the Lower Inn Valley, layers of depth hoar also lie embedded in the snowpack. The snow which has fallen atop it since the end of January and was then subjected to much wind influence is slowly losing its firmness, but is still hard and deep enough to transmit tensions across large areas. The bonding of these two layers is generally still poor, making it quite prone to triggering. The snow layering in steep, sun bathed terrain is more favourable: a melt freeze crust is evident there which has a stabilising effect. The snow surface currently consists of loosely packed powder snow far and wide; at lower altitudes and in very steep, sun bathed terrain, melt freeze crusts are increasingly evident. At high altitudes, the snow layering is often more favourable due to the irregularity of the snow surface.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

As of about 1600 m altitude, clear and sunny weather conditions today, with good visibility. Below that altitude, particularly in the easternmost mountain ranges, impeded visibility due to fog clinging to the mountain flanks. Wintery cold temperatures. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 11 to minus 7 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 15 degrees. Light winds, predominantly from westerly directions.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Slowly receding avalanche danger.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe