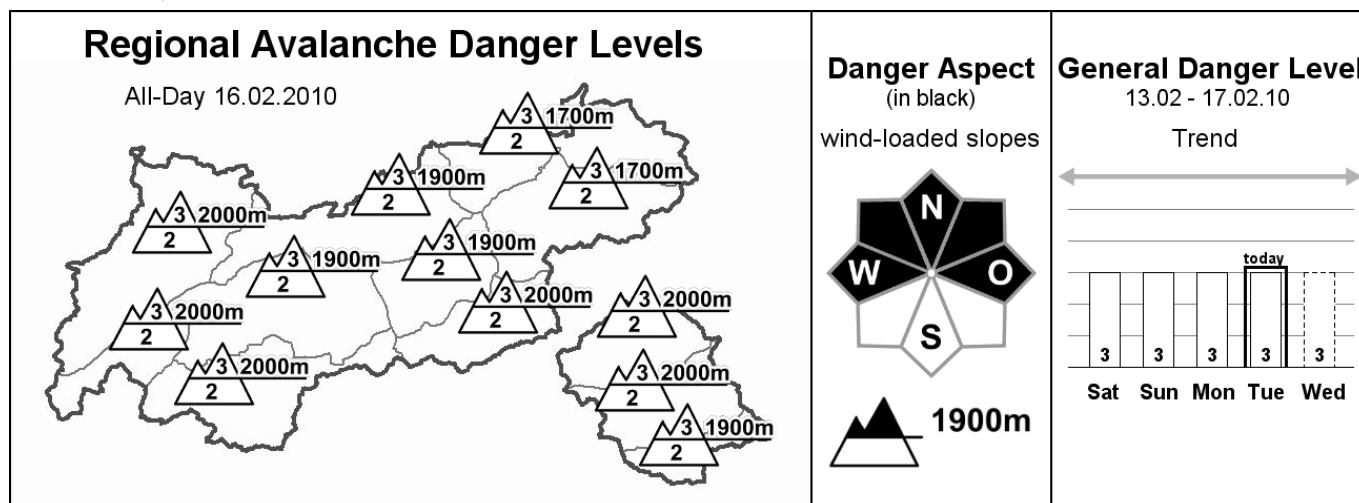


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Tuesday, 16.02.2010, at 07:30



Avalanche danger is receding only slowly at intermediate and high altitudes

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger is subsiding, but particularly at intermediate and high altitudes still demands high caution of backcountry skiers and freeriders. The major peril stems ongoingly from snowdrift accumulations which have formed since the end of January and in places are still poorly bonded with the old snowpack. This has been dramatically confirmed by daily avalanches which have caught people in their wake, most of which have fortunately ended well. The fracture depth of these avalanches is about 40 cm; some have been released over large surface areas. Particularly endangered is west to north to east facing steep terrain above the treeline. However, caution is equally necessary in steep, sparsely wooded forest areas. The situation is more favourable at lower altitudes, as well as in those places which have been traversed or descended on skis or boards all winter long. The situation in high alpine regions is also tending towards improvement, although particularly in the Northern Alps freshly formed snowdrift accumulations are increasingly perilous.

SNOW LAYERING

Far and wide in Tyrol, snow depths are below average. The snow layering is still unfavourable, particularly at intermediate and high altitudes. Atop a generally loosely packed, faceted old snowpack, in which thin melt freeze crusts lie embedded, are older snowdrift masses whose bonding to the old snow is overall quite poor. Any assessment of the hazards is made much more difficult by the fact that this snowdrift is covered and concealed by very loose powder snow. On the uppermost surface is often surface hoar; on very steep and sun-bathed slopes there is also frequently a melt freeze crust.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Excellent weather for skiing: unimpeded sunshine, with good visibility in high alpine regions. Temperatures are expected to rise significantly over the course of the day. Only in typical areas exposed to foehn wind will there be gusty southerly winds as a disturbance. On the southern flank of the Alps, dense fog will cling to the mountain flanks all morning long. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 12 to minus 5 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 17 to minus 10 degrees. Moderate southwesterly winds, in foehn-exposed areas the wind will be strong and blustery.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

The avalanche danger continues to decrease - but slowly.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe