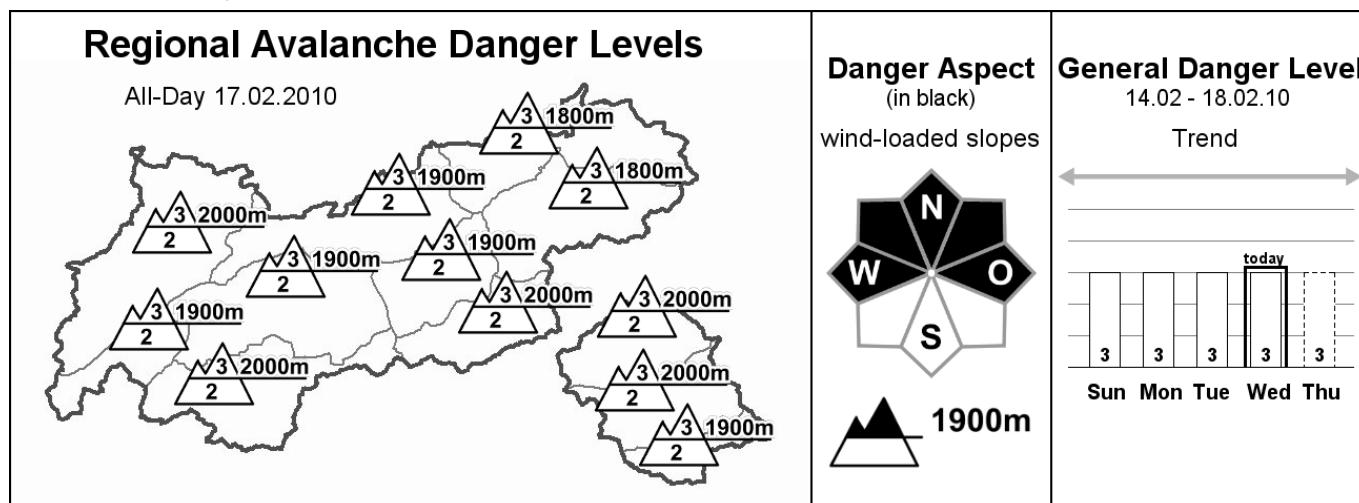


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Wednesday, 17.02.2010, at 07:30



Strong southerly winds in high alpine regions - new, trigger sensitive snowdrift accumulations

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger remains dependent on altitude, even though the situation has improved since last week. In the Lower Inn Valley the danger is considerable above 1800 m, elsewhere above 1900 m or 2000 m. Below that altitude it is moderate, at low altitudes it is low in many places. Backcountry skiers and freeriders should exercise great caution towards snowdrift accumulations which have formed since the end of January. Because of the loosely packed powder atop the snowdrift, such danger zones are nearly impossible - if not downright impossible - to recognize. They occur most frequently at the treeline and above, especially on west to north to east facing slopes. In steep and very steep terrain, avalanches are still possible through minimum additional loading. The fracture depths are generally not large, but avalanches can be released over large surface areas. In addition, new snowdrift accumulations which will form from the strong southwesterly wind also require great caution: they are easily triggered, but generally easily recognized.

SNOW LAYERING

The snowpack at low and intermediate altitudes and in very steep, sun bathed terrain has now stabilised somewhat. In those places there are now many melt freeze crusts on or near the surface. At the treeline and above, the snowpack, on west to north to east facing slopes in particular, is unfavourable. In those places, beneath a very loosely packed snowpack which is sometimes covered with surface hoar, snowdrift accumulations which have formed since the end of January are deposited which are deep enough in many places to transmit tensions over large areas. The bonding with the faceted old snowpack beneath the snowdrift masses continues to be poor. At higher altitudes, new snowdrift accumulations are expected to form and be deposited atop surface hoar. This raises their proneness to triggering.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Windy but quite sunny skiing conditions in the mountains today. The freezing level is at 2000 m, but the strong winds will make the higher temperatures barely perceptible subjectively. In South Tyrol, much less sunshine and towards the Main Alpine Ridge some snow flurries are possible in the foehn barrier zones. Temperature at 2000 m: zero degrees; at 3000 m: minus 6 degrees. Brisk to strong southwesterly winds widespread, in the Tux Alps the southerly winds will be of storm strength.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

In high altitudes, new snowdrift accumulations will be frequent and widespread.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe