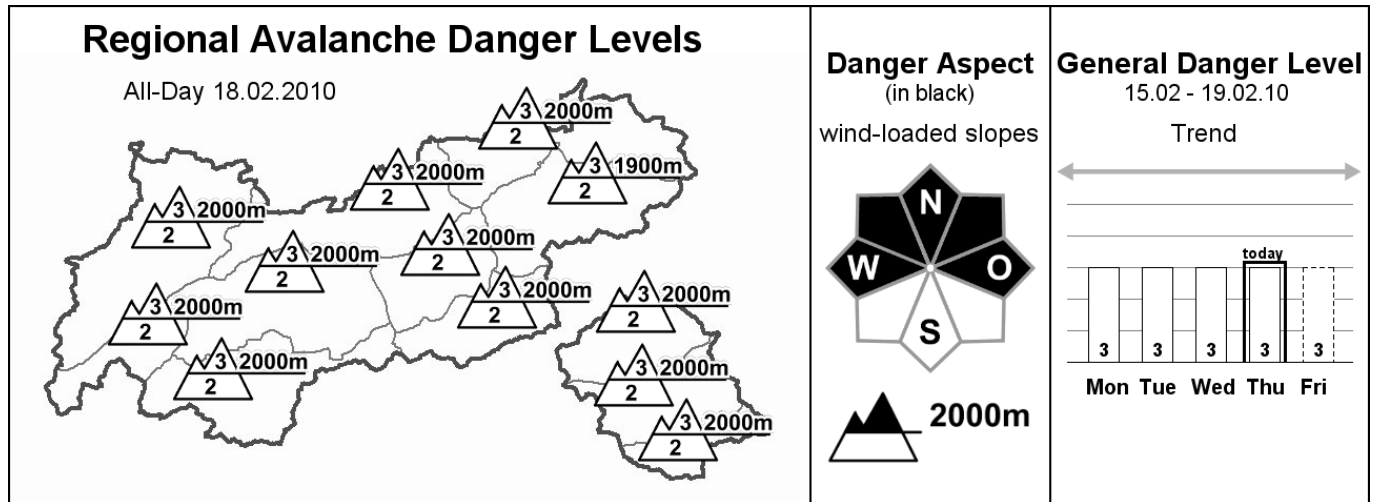


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Thursday, 18.02.2010, at 07:30



Caution urged on very steep, shady slopes - Beware fresh snowdrift above the treeline

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger has receded somewhat due to the rise in temperatures. Below about 2000 m, moderate danger prevails widespread. Above that altitude it remains considerable. Avalanche prone locations for backcountry skiers and freeriders are to be found primarily on west to north to east facing slopes above the treeline, in isolated cases also on very steep, shady slopes in sparsely wooded forest areas. There, the snowdrift accumulations which have formed since the end of January and in very steep terrain can still be triggered by minimum additional loading. Very steep terrain which has not been used much this winter must be evaluated with extreme care. In addition, the strong southerly winds since yesterday have formed new snowdrift accumulations which are increasingly found atop surface hoar on northwest to north to northeast facing slopes above the treeline; these are very prone to triggering. With some experience, however, they are easy to recognize. Furthermore, hardened, hollow sounding snowpack on steep, wind exposed slopes should currently be avoided.

SNOW LAYERING

The marked rise in temperatures led to a thoroughly wet snowpack yesterday in all expositions up to about 1700 m. Above that altitude this was the case primarily for the surface layers on sun bathed slopes. In these areas, the surface hoar was destroyed. Above that altitude, frequently above approximately 2000 m, the surface hoar is still evident on shady slopes. Since yesterday, snowdrift masses have formed which are poorly bonded with the surface hoar. The old snowpack consisting of depth hoar is still a potential bed surface for slab avalanches beneath the snowdrift masses which have formed since the end of January. The steeper the slope, the more likely it is to be triggered.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

On the Main Alpine Ridge and south thereof, the peaks are mostly shrouded in clouds and a bit of snowfall is expected. Along the Northern Alps, clouds are generally above the summits and only isolated snowfall is anticipated. This afternoon in northern regions, increasingly sunny, on the Main Alpine Ridge a barrier zone for the foehn winds will be built. The southwesterly wind will increase in velocity this afternoon and evening. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 1 degree; at 3000 m: minus 7 degrees. Light to moderate southwesterly winds to begin with, then increasingly strong this afternoon; this evening and during the night they will be of storm strength.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Initially, no significant change in the avalanche danger.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe