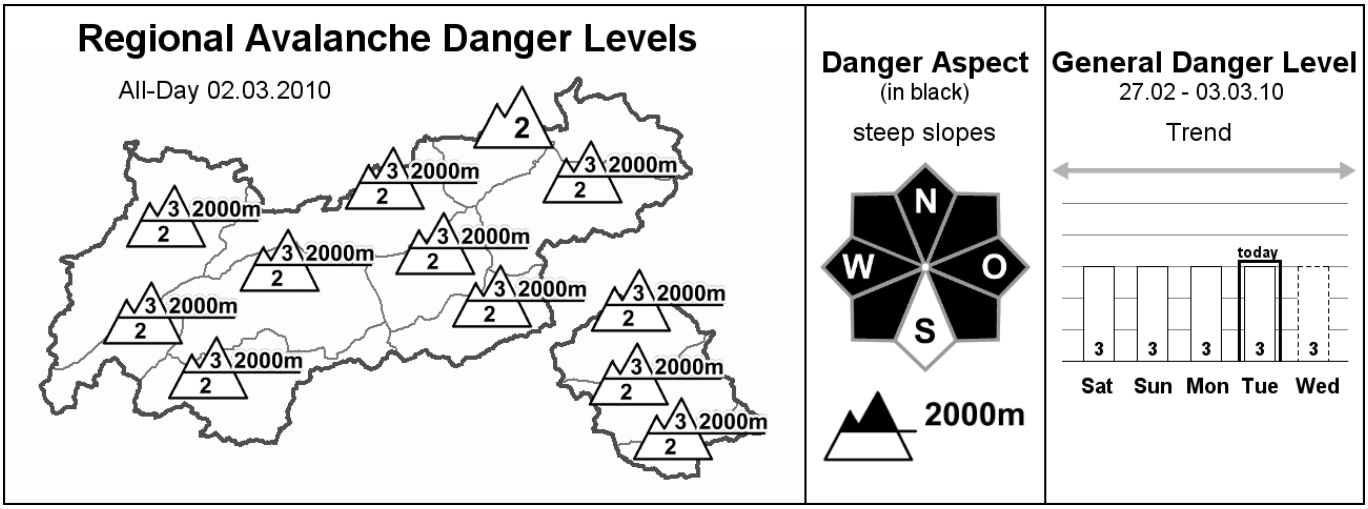
Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Tuesday, 02.03.2010, at 07:30



Ongoing unfavourable conditions in many places above 2000 m amidst considerable avalanche danger

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AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger remains contingent on altitude. Above the treeline considerable danger generally prevails, below that altitude it is moderate, at low altitudes often low. Avalanche prone locations for backcountry skiers and freeriders are currently to be found primarily on west-northwest to north to east-northeast facing steep slopes. In unfrequented terrain, even minimum additional loading is sufficient to trigger a slab avalanche. Above approximately 2400 m, the snowpack can increasingly be disturbed by minimum additional loading, as is also possible on sun bathed, very steep slopes. Elsewhere, large additional loading is now generally necessary. Caution: the storm strength winds of recent days have formed hardened wind crusts in many places which present the illusion of safety. Particularly in transition areas from shallow to deep snow, the danger of triggering is prevalent. The situation in heavily frequented terrain is more favourable. All in all, in outlying terrain above the treeline, extensive experience in assessing avalanche hazards, together with great restraint, are imperative.

SNOW LAYERING

The snowpack is currently characterized by widespread irregularity. At low and intermediate altitudes, the higher temperatures of recent days have stabilized the snowpack somewhat. On the surface there is occasionally a melt freeze crust capable of bearing loads. The weak snow base is currently the decisive factor. With increasing altitude, loose layers of depth hoar are increasingly frequent, with thin, hardened melt freeze crusts or wind-compressed layers on top of them. This is also the case on sun bathed slopes, although up to 2400 m these slopes also have hardened and thicker crusts embedded in the snowpack which exercise a stabilizing influence. On shade covered slopes above approximately 2200 m, surface hoar is evident in many places.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Heavily overcast mountain weather with brisk winds in the Northern Alps and up to 10 cm of snowfall from the Arlberg to the Hohe Tauern, on the southern flank of the Alps somewhat less. At midday, the clouds may disperse somewhat. Tonight the snow showers are expected to taper off. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 4 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 11 degrees. In the Northern Alps strong westerly winds, elsewhere moderate to brisk. Towards evening, the wind will shift to northwesterly and increase in velocity.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Increasing wind velocity will lead to new, relatively small sized snowdrift accumulations.

Patrick Nairz **Translated by Jeffrey McCabe**