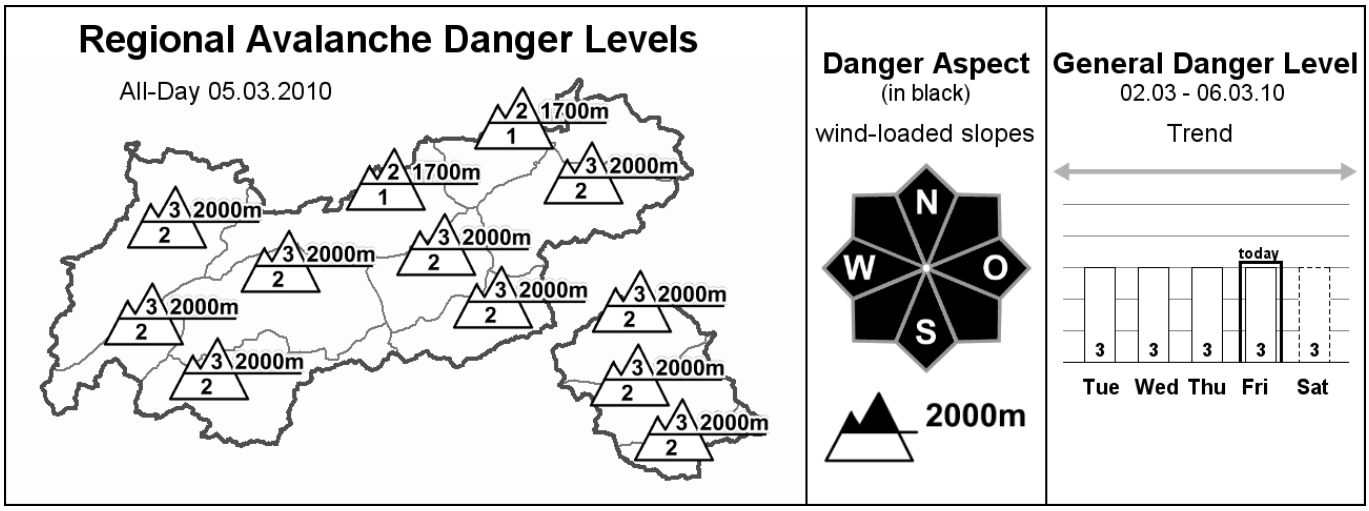
Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Friday, 05.03.2010, at 07:30



Unchanged situation: generally considerable danger above approximately 2000 m

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AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger remains contingent on altitude: above approximately 2000 m it is considerable; between 2000 and 1700 m it is moderate; below that altitude it is low. Avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily in very steep, unfrequented terrain above the treeline on west-northwest to north to east-northeast facing slopes, where even minimum additional loading is sufficient to trigger slab avalanches. This is possible also in the remaining expositions on very steep slopes above approximately 2400 m. Below that altitude, a somewhat more stable melt freeze crust has formed on the surface of sun bathed steep slopes, making large additional loading necessary to trigger avalanches. Sparsely wooded, very steep forest areas near the treeline also necessitate great caution. In high alpine regions in wind exposed areas, triggering avalanches is slightly less likely; massive wind crusts have formed in many places. However, triggering avalanches is still possible in transition areas from shallow to deep snow at those altitudes.

SNOW LAYERING

Through the drop in temperatures since the beginning of the week, the moist or wet snowpacks have been able to stabilise at low and intermediate altitudes. With increasing altitude, melt freeze crusts are increasingly evident on sun bathed slopes, but their stabilising influence decreases with ascending altitude. Last night there was about 5 cm of snowfall throughout Tyrol, accompanied by strong winds in many places, which has transported the fresh fallen snow. The snowdrift masses are currently insignificant. What is more important at high altitudes and in high alpine regions in all expositions is the layer of depth hoar which is embedded inside the snowpack. It is usually surrounded by thin, hardened crusts and has often served as a bed surface for slab avalanches. In the North sector, in addition, above approximately 2300 m on very steep, wind protected slopes, the bonding of the surface hoar, which is now blanketed with new fallen snow, and the snowdrift lying atop it is poor.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

It is bitter cold and, in many places, windy. In the Northern Alps, a few centimeters of snowfall is expected over the course of the day. Visibility will often be impeded by clouds and residual fog clinging to the mountain flanks. On the southern flank of the Alps it will be sunnier. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 14 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 22 degrees. Moderate to brisk northwesterly winds.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

New snowdrift masses will form over the course of the day; the deeper they are, the more trigger sensitive they are.

Patrick Nairz **Translated by Jeffrey McCabe**