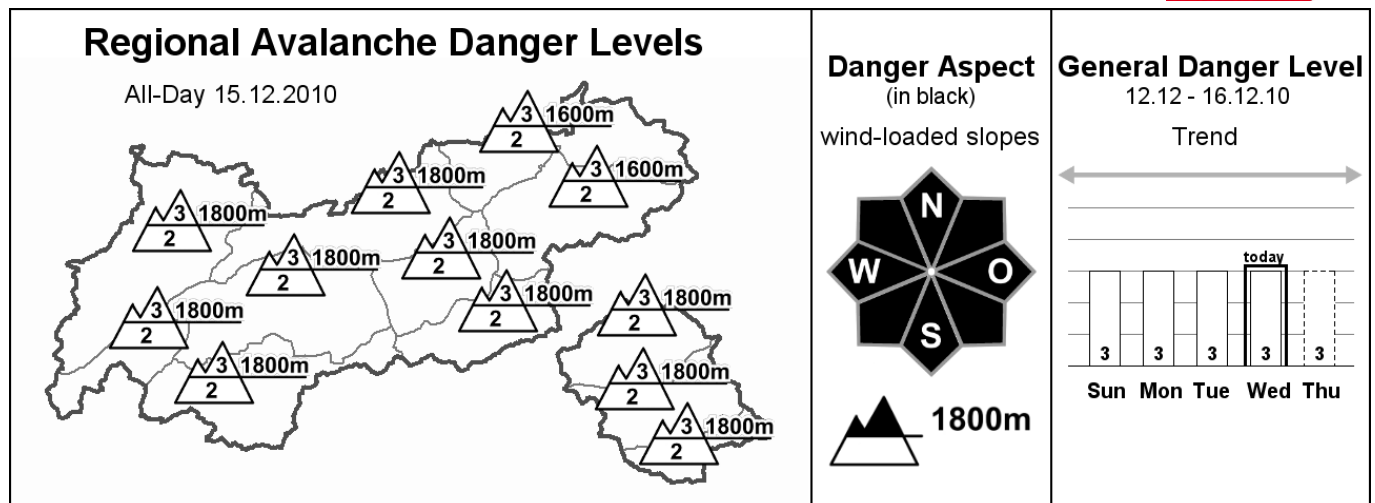


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Wednesday, 15.12.2010, at 07:30



Recently formed snowdrift accumulations above the treeline are the major peril

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger remains contingent upon altitude. Above approximately 1800 m, considerable danger prevails; below that altitude it is moderate; the hazards decrease with descending altitude, except in the eastern regions which had so much snowfall. The major peril stems from recently formed snowdrift accumulations, the fresher they are the more easily triggered. However, the fresh snowdrift is also easiest to recognize. Most frequent occurring near ridge lines on east to south to west facing slopes, in drifted gullies and bowls. In very steep terrain, even minimum additional loading is sufficient to trigger them, although the masses will unleash usually small sized, maximum medium sized avalanches. In addition, older snowdrift masses between 1800 and 2200 m and transition areas from shallow to deep snow can be triggered by minimum additional loading, in other areas greater additional loading is necessary. In high alpine, shady, very steep regions, avalanches can be triggered from a layer of depth hoar near the ground which formed in autumn. Full depth snowslides are still possible in the eastern regions and in southern East Tyrol, which received the most snow.

SNOW LAYERING

The snowpack is currently highly varied and very irregular. Above the treeline, utterly windblown broad ridges can be found adjacent to deeply drifted areas. Three layers are potential bed surfaces for slab avalanches currently: the loosely packed fresh fallen snow atop of which snowdrift has been deposited; the rain crusts embedded in the snowpack between 1800 and 2200 m altitude, which are encircled by thin, loose layers; and finally, in high alpine regions (above 3000 m), on shady slopes, a layer of depth hoar near the ground. Weak layers are not extensive, which will make the avalanches smaller in magnitude.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

General weather: the icy cold northern air current is still intact, but will bring moister air masses to Tyrol today. Tomorrow, a tiny intermediate high will make the air drier. Simultaneously, a pronounced low is developing over the northern Atlantic which will reach Tyrol Friday evening from the north, forcing the high altitude air current to temporarily shift to westerly. A cold front which is part of this weather system will bring snowfall on Friday. Mountain weather today: dense fog and snowfall as far as the Main Alpine Ridge, most of which is expected in the Northern Alps: as much as 15 to 25 cm by this evening, elsewhere, maximum 10 cm. The further south from the Main Alpine Ridge you go, the better the visibility. However, icy cold and strong velocity northerly winds will be blowing in exposed areas. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 14 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 18 degrees.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

The avalanche danger will subside only gradually.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe