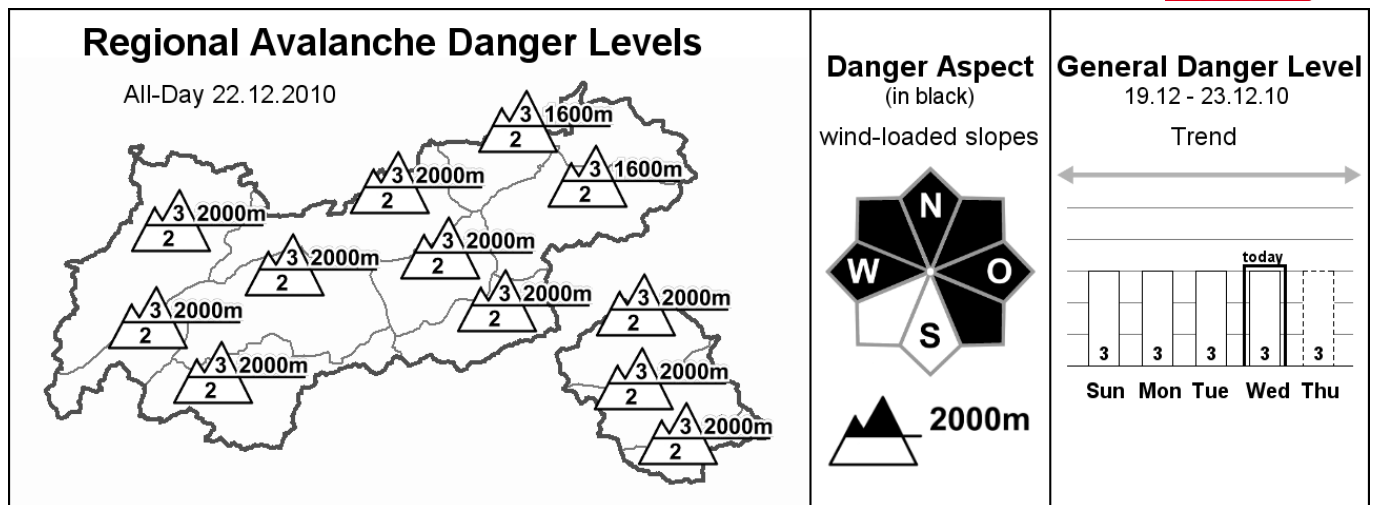


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Wednesday, 22.12.2010, at 07:30



Considerable avalanche danger widespread above 2000 m, beware stormy south wind!

AVALANCHE DANGER

In Tyrol's backcountry touring regions, adverse conditions currently prevail, the avalanche danger level above 2000 m is considerable widespread. Avalanche prone locations are to be found primarily on west to north to southeast facing wind loaded slopes. Caution is generally urged, since storm-strength southerly winds are causing new snowdrift accumulations to form ongoingly. These drifted masses are, in general, poorly bonded with the old snowpack, making them easy to trigger as avalanches even by minimum additional loading. At low and intermediate altitudes, full depth snowslides are becoming increasingly likely, due to the mild temperatures. This applies particularly to steep, smooth, grass covered slopes.

SNOW LAYERING

The snowpack is currently being strongly influenced by wind. Particularly above the treeline, the snow depths are highly varied and irregular even within small surface areas. Windblown knolls or broad ridges are often right next to deeply drifted gullies or bowls. The uppermost snowpack surface has been compacted by wind, but is still loose in some places. At low altitudes, the mild temperatures are aiding the snowpack to settle and consolidate. At intermediate altitudes, the snow layering is adverse far and wide: beneath a pronounced wind crust is generally a weak layer of faceted, loose snow crystals. Besides that, thin melt-freeze crusts are embedded inside the snowpack, interspersed by loosely packed, trigger-sensitive layers.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Weather: At the forefront of a powerful low whose center is over Portugal, Tyrol lies in the grips of a mild southwesterly current. Foehn conditions reign on the northern flank of the Alps. On Friday, a cold front will traverse the land and temperatures will drop significantly. Mountain weather today: storm velocity southerly winds, with diffuse visibility in the early part of the day through a dense umbrella of cloud. This afternoon, visibility will improve. On the Main Alpine Ridge and in the Southern Alps, barrier clouds cling to the alpine flanks; as of 1400 m intermittent snowfall is anticipated. Very mild. Temperature at 2000 m: between minus 2 and plus 2 degrees; at 3000 m: between minus 6 and minus 3 degrees. Strong to storm-strength southerly winds at high altitudes, slackening off somewhat during the afternoon.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Due to continuing mild temperatures, the danger of full depth snowslides at low and intermediate altitudes is escalating.

Rudi Mair

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe