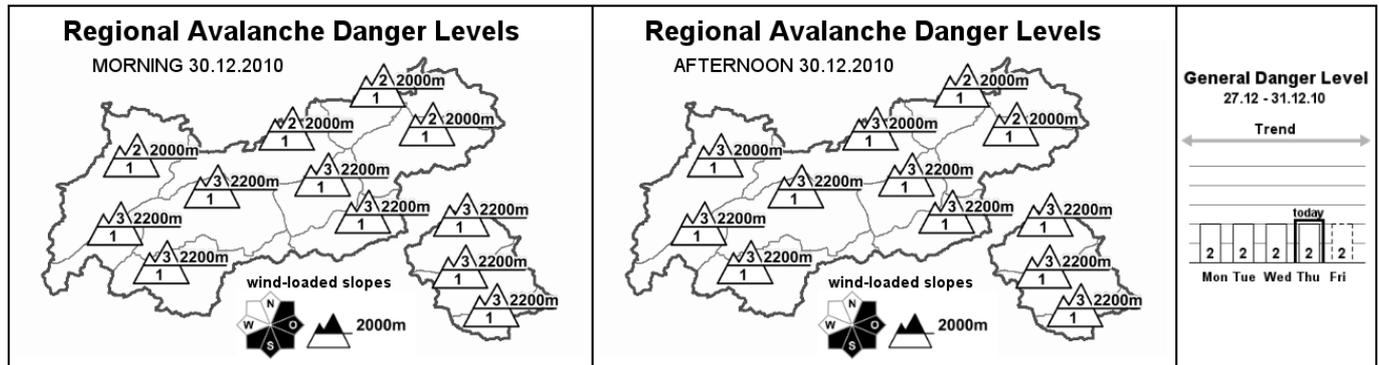


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Thursday, 30.12.2010, at 07:30



Caution towards fresh snowdrift accumulations at high altitudes

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger is contingent on altitude, to some extent on the daytime warming cycle. Below 2000 m, low danger generally prevails, above that altitude the danger level in northern regions is moderate, further to the south the danger level is considerable, resulting mainly from the recently formed snowdrift accumulations which still can be triggered by minimum additional loading. Their frequency, spread and depth increase with ascending altitude; they are particularly frequent on steep, northeast to south to southwest facing slopes next to ridge lines as well as in gullies and bowls. Due to the rising temperatures, smallish slab avalanches can be naturally triggered on very steep, sunny slopes next to ridge lines. Equally likely are loosely packed snow avalanches from rock-studded terrain; and isolated full depth snowslides at low and intermediate altitudes from steep, grassy slopes. Triggering the old snowpack is now possible only in isolated cases from large additional loading, especially in transition areas from shallow to deep snow and on very steep, shady slopes around 2200 m altitude and above 3000 m.

SNOW LAYERING

The snowpack on sunny slopes and at low altitudes moistened yesterday, through the warm air and solar radiation. At high altitudes and in high alpine regions, the uppermost snowpack surface remained dry. Recently formed snowdrift accumulations above 2000 m are generally deposited on top of cold, loosely packed snow, sometimes atop very light new fallen snow. The bonding of this snow with the snowdrift atop it is usually poor. Through the higher temperatures, these snowdrift masses are more prone to triggering. At altitudes around 2200 m there are also thin ice crusts embedded inside the old snowpack from the rainfall of November which could serve as a bed surface for avalanches. Equally treacherous, in high alpine regions, i.e. above 3000 m, is a layer of depth hoar near the ground from early winter.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

General weather: wedged between a low over the Atlantic and a powerful low over eastern Europe, an intermediate high will maintain dominance over western and central Europe at the end of the year, bringing relatively mild conditions. Mountain weather today: predominantly mild and pleasant weather conditions for winter sports. The snows will tend to melt up to 1500 m. During the morning hours, fogbanks are a potential disturbance especially on the slopes of the Lower Inn Valley, however sunshine is expected later on in the day. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 1 degree; at 3000 m: minus 8 degrees. Light winds in general, only at high altitudes with the northwesterly wind be brisk.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Receding avalanche danger.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe