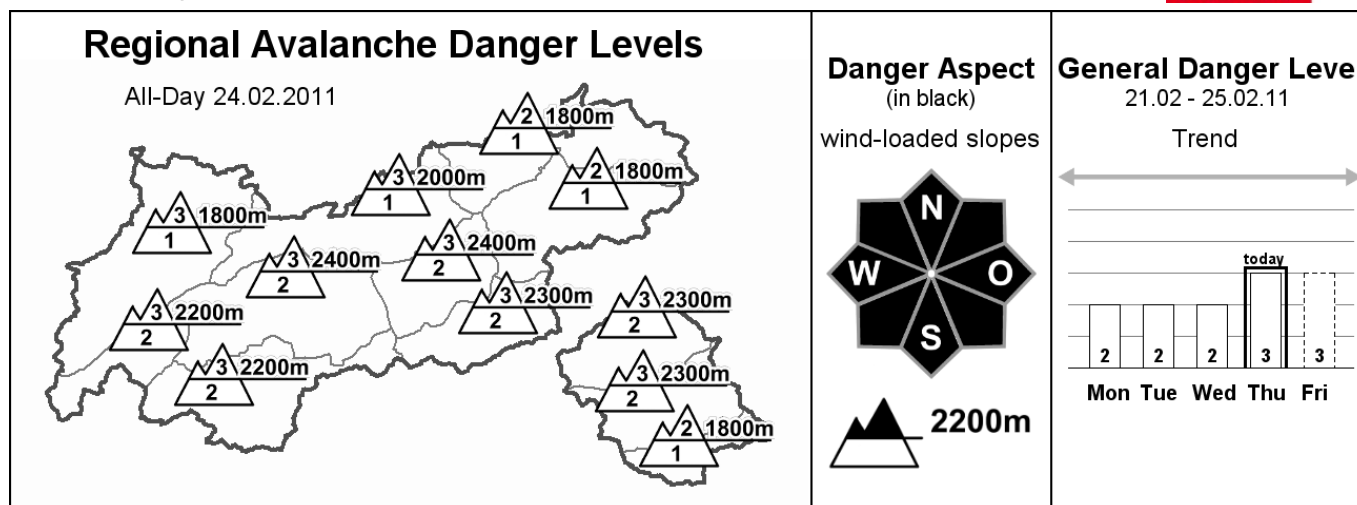


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Thursday, 24.02.2011, at 07:30



Considerable avalanche danger is some regions above 2200 m - Beware the snowdrift

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger level has escalated slightly and is now considerable above approximately 2200 m in the regions where it snowed most heavily: Arlberg/Ausserfern, the northern Stubai and Ötztal Alps and along the Main Alpine Ridge. The major danger stems from the recently formed snowdrift accumulations. Due to the prevailing wind direction, they occur most frequently near ridgelines and in gullies and bowls of eastern to southern to western exposition. The snowpack is currently highly prone to triggering, as was evidenced yesterday, when a number of backcountry skiers triggered avalanches, and small, naturally triggered avalanches were also observed. With some experience in evaluating the hazards, these danger zones can be easily recognized. In addition, caution is also urged towards older snowdrift masses, now blanketed over by new fallen snow, near ridgelines in shady, steep terrain, particularly in the East Tyrolean Dolomites and the southern Stubai and Ötztal Alps. Below the treeline, the danger is low, in general.

SNOW LAYERING

Wind is the decisive factor at the moment, and it varies highly from spot to spot. At high altitudes and in high alpine regions, it is blowing at strong velocity for the most part, and transporting great amounts of snow. Yesterday's "wind flags" clinging to the peaks, particularly along the Main Alpine Ridge, were clear indicators of this. The bonding of snowdrift with the very cold and partially loose fresh fallen snow is poor, in general, making the proneness to triggering quite high. An additional bed surface for slab avalanches is found in steep, shady terrain above approximately 2300 m, namely, a loosely packed, faceted layer of old snow. The peril stems from the insufficient bonding of this snow to the snowdrift which formed last week.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Weather in general: a powerful northerly air current places Tyrol at the rim of a warm front. On Saturday, an interim high will make itself felt, followed by the next disturbance. Next week, a cold easterly air current will take over. Mountain weather today: cloudbanks in western regions will gradually shroud the summits. This afternoon, intermittent snowfall is expected. In eastern regions, some cloud, some sunshine. From the Sarntal Alps to the East Tyrolean mountains, predominantly sunny. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 11 to minus 7 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 18 to minus 13 degrees. Moderate velocity northerly winds.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

No immediate change of any significance in the avalanche situation.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe