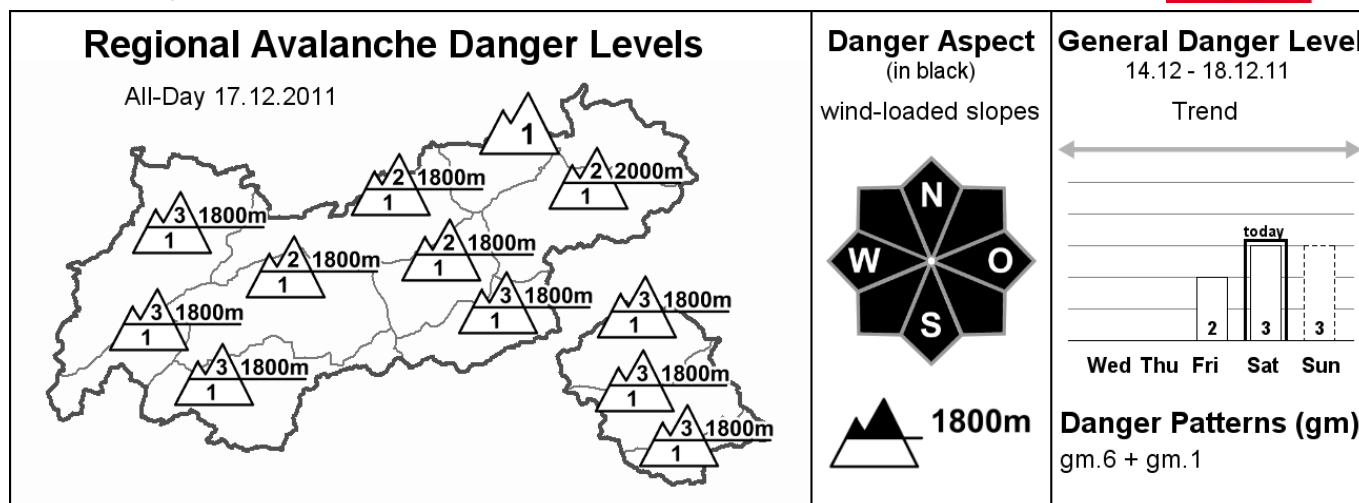


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Saturday, 17.12.2011, at 07:30



Newly formed snowdrift masses amidst snowfall and wind

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger has escalated in the regions which had heavy snowfall: Arlberg-Ausserfern, the regions along the Main Alpine Ridge and East Tirol. Above the treeline, considerable avalanche danger prevails there; below it, the peril is low. In the remaining regions, the hazards above 2000 m are moderate; below that altitude, low; and in the furthest eastern regions, low. Avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep, wind loaded slopes, especially above approximately 2000 m. With ascending altitude, the likelihood of these drifted masses being triggered tends to increase. The danger zones are highly variable and irregular, due to yesterday's very strong winds; they are especially prevalent in areas adjacent to ridgelines, as well as in gullies and bowls. Special caution should still be exercised on steep, shady slopes above approximately 2600 m and also on steep, west and east facing glaciated slopes, where avalanches can often be triggered even by minimum additional loading.

SNOW LAYERING

Since yesterday there has been 10 to 30 cm of snowfall in western regions ; along the Main Alpine Ridge, 10 cm; in East Tyrol, 15 to 40 cm; and in remaining Tirol, only a few centimeters of fresh fallen snow. The snowpack was heavily impacted by yesterday's storm. Broad ridges are often bare of snow, with heavily snowdrifted areas immediately adjacent to them. Due to the mild temperatures yesterday - it was raining to as high as 1600 m - the snowpack below the treeline is now quite stable in general. Above the treeline, snowdrift accumulations are highly trigger sensitive, becoming more so with increasing altitude. The snowpack is least favourable of all where there was still a snowpack from autumn, namely, on shady slopes above approximately 2600 m and in high alpine regions on west to north to east facing slopes, where depth hoar has formed which is in turn very poorly bonded to the snow deposited on top of it.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Weather in general: a cold front is in the process of withdrawing, leaving Tirol in the path of a westerly to northwesterly air current this weekend, in which cold, highly moist air masses will accumulate on the northern flank of the Alps. On the southern flank of the Alps, northerly winds are drying the air out. Mountain weather today: it will remain quite windy, especially in exposed terrain, but not as stormy as yesterday. There will be lots of fog veiling the peaks of North Tirol, accompanied by snow showers, particularly in the Northern Alps. Very low temperatures in the mountains, exacerbated by the wind. Improved visibility on the southern flank of the Alps, but with icy northerly winds. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 10 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 17 degrees. At high altitudes, the northwesterly wind will be strong, otherwise moderate.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

The major danger zones are still: snowdrift masses ongoingly being formed afresh on steep slopes; and predominantly shady terrain above about 2600 m.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe