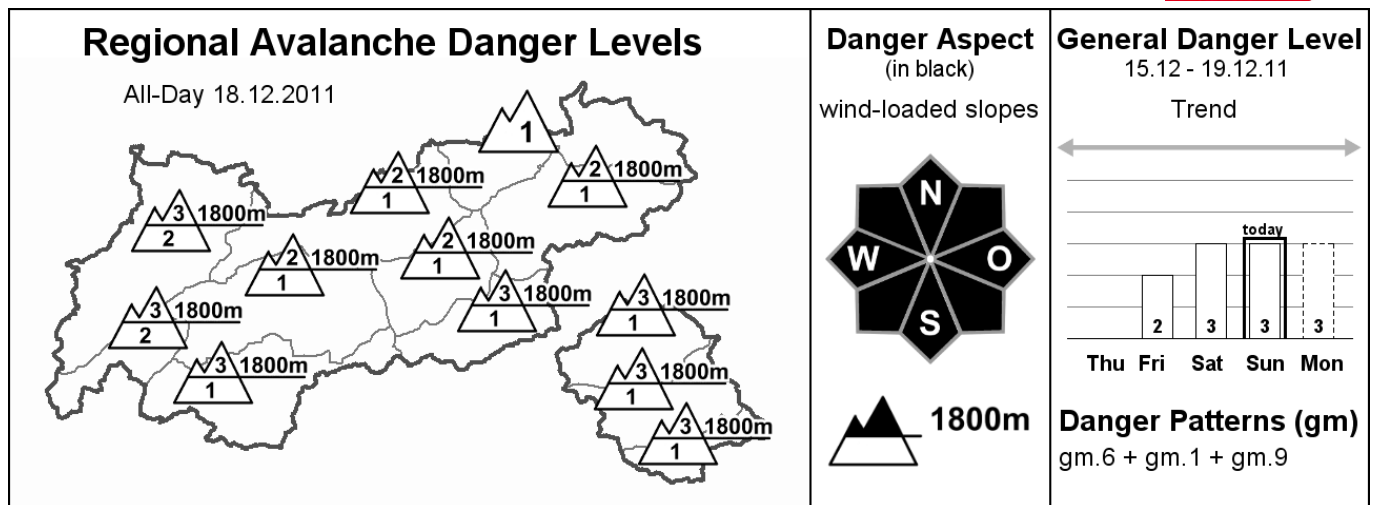


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Sunday, 18.12.2011, at 07:30



Unfavourable situation, considerable danger, in the west. Beware fresh snowdrift!

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger is generally contingent on altitude. Conditions are least favourable where there has been most snowfall, i.e. in the Arlberg, Ausserfern, Silvretta and Samnaun regions, where considerable danger prevails above the treeline, moderate danger below it. But also in the regions along the Main Alpine Ridge and in East Tirol, the danger above the treeline is considerable. The eastern regions where there was little snowfall have more favourable conditions. The major peril for backcountry skiers and freeriders stems from freshly formed snowdrift accumulations. These are very widespread and massive, especially in western regions, and can be found in all expositions, particularly in areas near ridgelines and in gullies and bowls. Due to the markedly lower temperatures, they are brittle and thus, can be easily triggered even by minimum additional loading. In the regions along the Main Alpine Ridge, caution is urged towards steep, shady terrain above approximately 2400 m, since the snowpack there can fracture down to the ground through the deeply embedded layer of depth hoar. Our tip: in spite of the fantastic snow, avoid freshly drifted, very steep slopes altogether.

SNOW LAYERING

There was once again snowfall in Tirol, most of which fell in western regions: in the Arlberg and Silvretta regions, 20 to 40 cm; in remaining Tirol, 5 to 15 cm of new fallen snow. Southern East Tirol had no snowfall whatsoever. The wind has by now slackened off, but is still sufficiently strong to transport great masses of snow. Freshly formed snowdrift accumulations are currently brittle and highly prone to triggering, quite liable to fracture at the borderline between the layer of snowdrift and the fresh fallen snow. Graupel is embedded in the snowpack in isolated cases, which over small surfaces escalates the trigger sensitivity still further. Furthermore, a pronounced weak layer is to be found primarily on shady slopes above approximately 2400 m in the regions along the Main Alpine Ridge: residual snow from autumn, which in the interim has mutated to depth hoar.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Weather in general: Arctic air masses continue to be funneled to Tirol on the back of the old low pressure weather system with its center over the Baltic Sea. Over Italy, a small sized low pressure zone is also taking shape. Tomorrow, Monday, a low altitude high pressure zone may move in from the west before the next front approaches during the course of the day on Tuesday. Mountain weather today: Tirol's mountain world is deep in the lap of winter, with icy cold temperatures. Visibility will often be limited by fog today, accompanied by sporadic, isolated snow showers on the northern flank of the Alps. Towards the Main Alpine Ridge, bright spells can be expected. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 10 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 18 degrees. Moderate westerly to northwesterly winds.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Continue to avoid fresh snowdrift on steep slopes. Caution also urged towards high altitude shady slopes.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe