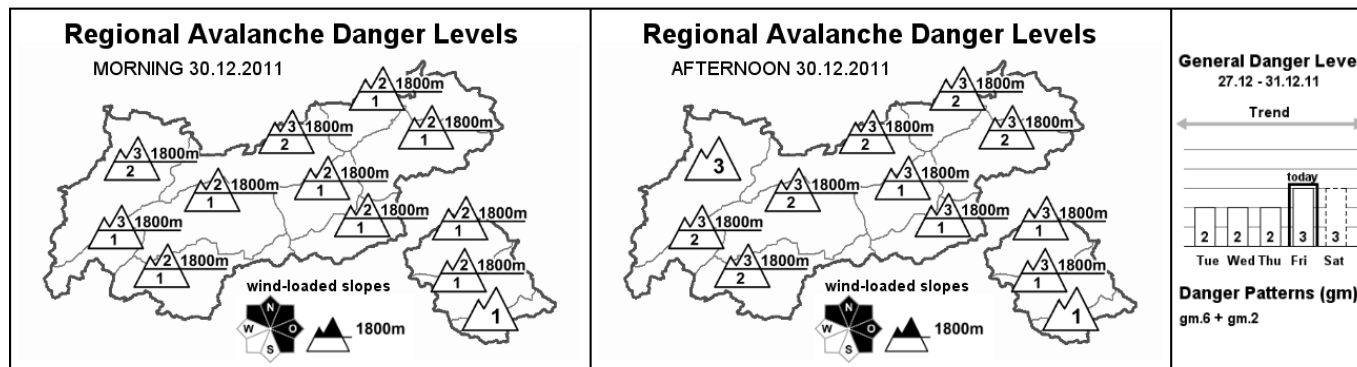


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Friday, 30.12.2011, at 07:30



Escalating avalanche danger over the day, amidst snowfall and strong winds

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger will increase during the day today, due partly to the snowfall coming from the west which has already begun and will soon spread across the entire countryside, and partly to the storm strength winds in some places. The major peril again stems from freshly formed snowdrift masses which in very steep terrain can be triggered even by minimum additional loading. Such danger zones occur increasingly frequently on northwest to north to southeast facing slopes, due to prevailing wind directions. Special caution is urged in areas near ridgelines. Diffuse visibility makes it more difficult to recognize the snowdrift masses. Continued caution is also urged on steep grassy slopes, where snowslides can be released, especially below glide cracks in the snowpack. In addition, a weak layer near the ground, especially along the Main Alpine Ridge above approximately 2500 m in very steep, shady terrain, can be triggered by large additional loading.

SNOW LAYERING

By and large, the snowpack is stably structured. A potential bed surface for slab avalanches is evident in the old snowpack, particularly along the Main Alpine Ridge in shady terrain above approximately 2500 m: a layer of depth hoar near the ground. An additional point of fracture is the border zone between the cold, loosely packed snowpack surface and the new snowdrift, especially prevalent on northwest to north to southeast facing slopes, where the powder snow has persisted longest.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Weather in general: cold, barrier cloud effect accompanied by snowfall down to low lying areas, with its focal point in North Tirol. On Saturday, renewed snowfall amidst a warm front, at lower altitudes in the form of rain until evening. On Sunday, New Year's Day, mild, clement conditions. Mountain weather today: moderate, sometimes heavy snowfall in the mountains, with 20 to 40 cm of fresh fallen snow anticipated in the Arlberg and Silvretta regions, elsewhere maximum 30 cm, amidst strong winds, including brief intervals of tranquility. On the southern flank of the Alps (excluding Main Alpine Ridge), only light snow showers bringing 5 to 15 cm of new fallen snow today. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 9 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 15 degrees. Strong, intermittently stormy northwesterly winds.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Ongoing considerable danger. Backcountry skiers and freeriders should assiduously avoid snowdrift accumulations on steep slopes over the next few days.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe