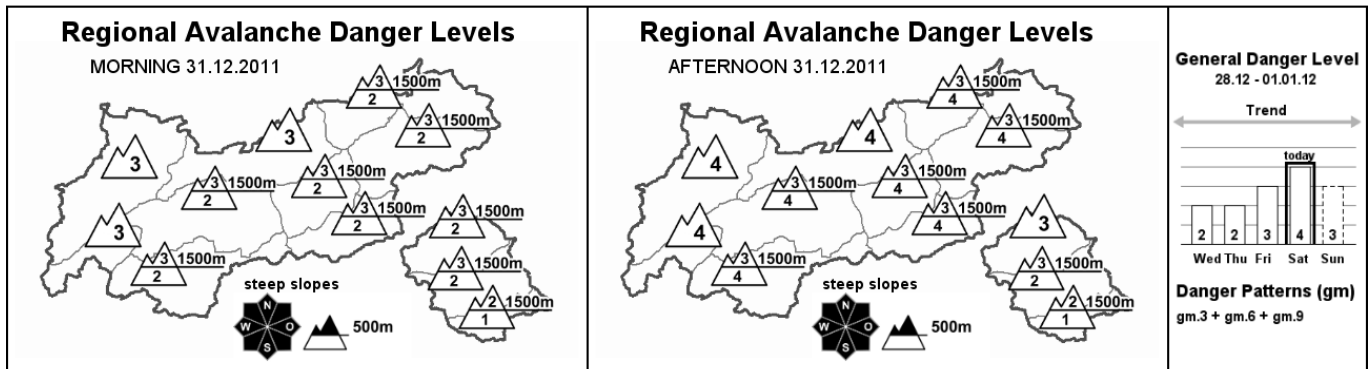


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Saturday, 31.12.2011, at 07:30



High danger this afternoon in western and rain-influenced regions

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger level in the Silvretta-Samnaun, Arlberg-Ausserfern and the western part of the Northern Alps will generally climb to 'high' this afternoon. Moreover, the danger level will also be high in the rain-influenced regions of North Tirol, i.e. below about 1500 m. Where rainfall is heaviest, increasingly frequent wet snow avalanches can be expected, as well as full depth snowslides on steep, grassy slopes. At higher altitudes and in high alpine regions, isolated naturally triggered avalanches can also be expected this afternoon, particularly on steep north to east to southeast facing slopes near ridgelines in the western regions where recent snowfall has been heaviest. For backcountry skiing and freeriding tours, unfavourable conditions prevail today. Poor visibility impedes the assessment of danger zones. The major peril stems from the increasing wetness of the snowpack at low altitudes, on the one hand; and on the other, from the freshly formed snowdrift accumulations whose proneness to triggering increases with ascending altitude.

SNOW LAYERING

The most recent bout of snowfall, together with strong to storm velocity winds, have been the formative factors in the snowpack. Over the last 24 hours in western and northwestern regions there has been an additional 30 to 60 cm of snowfall, in the remaining regions of Tirol generally 20 to 30 cm. Graupel has recently embedded itself inside the snowpack, which can serve as a bed surface for the new fallen snow which is forecast for today. Through today's rainfall, the snowpack will drastically forfeit its firmness. At higher altitudes, the freshly drifted snow and the old, loosely packed, cold snow beneath it are poorly bonded.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Weather in general: a powerful northwesterly air current coupled to a warm front is bringing heavy precipitation to Tirol today. Tomorrow, conditions will briefly improve, with temperatures in the mountains rising significantly. On Monday and Tuesday, the next cold front will arrive. Mountain weather today: in the Northern Alps and in the western part of the Main Alpine Ridge, heavy snowfall and very windy. In the Arlberg, Silvretta and Lechtal Alps, 20 to 40 cm of snowfall is anticipated, from place to place as much as 50 cm. Elsewhere, 30 cm of new fallen snow, in the Dolomites maximum 10 cm is expected. It will turn milder, on Saturday night conditions will improve. Temperature at 2000 m: from minus 10 rising to minus 3 degrees this evening; at 3000 m: rising to minus 7 degrees. Strong northwesterly winds, in the Northern Alps winds will reach storm strength.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

As precipitation slackens off, avalanche danger will recede. The major peril continues to be full depth snowslides; and at higher altitudes, freshly drifted snow.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe