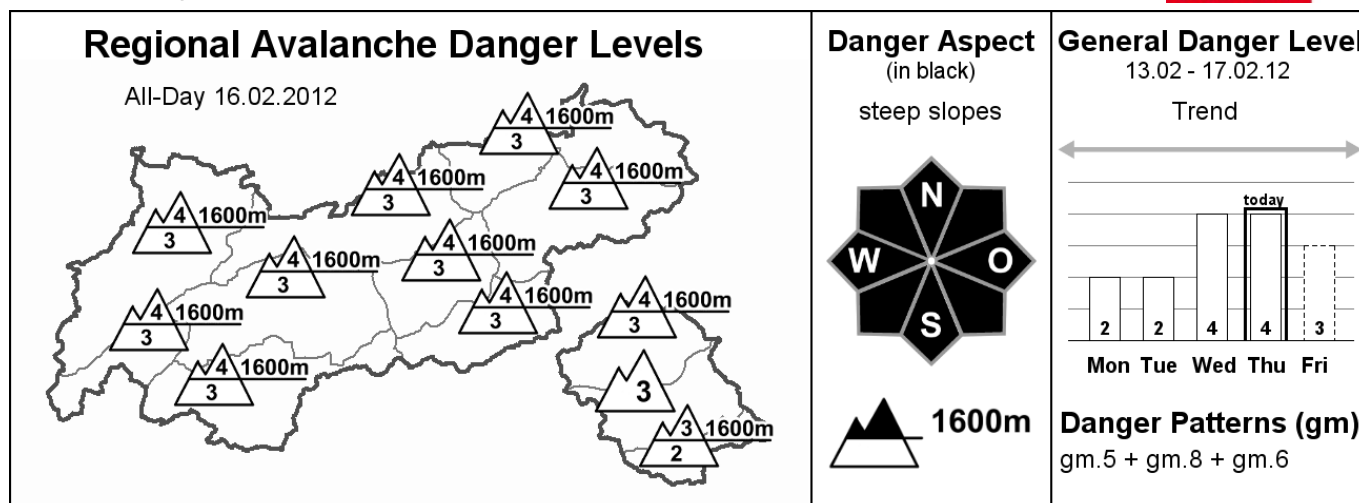


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Thursday, 16.02.2012, at 07:30



High avalanche danger widespread above 1600 m

AVALANCHE DANGER

Conditions are critical in Tirol's backcountry touring regions, the danger level above approximately 1600 m is "high" widespread. The major peril stems from freshly formed snowdrift accumulations which are poorly bonded with the existing snow surface. Avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects. Avalanches can be triggered even by minimum additional loading, making extensive experience imperative for backcountry skiing and freeriding tours. Those without such experience are urgently advised not to leave the secured ski runs. Naturally triggered avalanches are also possible in isolated cases. Such avalanches can attain medium size and endanger exposed sections of transportation routes.

SNOW LAYERING

Over the last 24 hours there has been heavy snowfall in some places: in the western part of the Northern Alps, in Arlberg/Ausserfern and in Silvretta/Samnaun there was 40 to 60 cm of new fallen snow. In the Stubai, Ötztal, Tux and Zillertal Alps, there was 30 to 50 cm of fresh fallen snow; in the eastern part of the Northern Alps, the Kitzbühel Alps and along the East Tirolean Tauern Ridge, maximum 40 cm. In remaining East Tirol, there was only 10 cm of snowfall. Strong to stormy westerly winds accompanied the snowfall, causing the fresh fallen snow to be intensely transported, giving rise to wide ranging snowdrift accumulations. New fallen and drifted snow now blanket an old snowpack which was thoroughly transformed during the cold wave, becoming loosely packed and unconsolidated. The snowdrift accumulations are thus quite inadequately bonded with the snowpack beneath it, the trigger sensitivity high. The lower layers of the snowpack have settled well, they are solid and stable, making a triggering down to more deeply embedded layers unlikely.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Weather in general: The barrier cloud effect on the northern flank of the Alps is weakening, an intermediate high is temporarily drying out the air masses. On the southern flank of the Alps, northerly foehn wind. Mountain weather today: In the Northern Alps and eastern Central Alps, visibility will be impaired by thick fog and snow showers; on the glaciers of western Tirol, conditions will be more pleasant. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 11 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 19 to minus 14 degrees. Strong northwesterly winds, slackening off later in the day.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Avalanche danger is expected to decrease only slowly

Rudi Mair

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe