Avalanche News

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol
Tuesday, 04.12.2012, at 07:45

Above 2000 m considerable danger in some regions - Snowslides on grassy slopes

AVALANCHE DANGER

In the regions along the Main Alpine Ridge and in East Tirol, considerable avalanche danger prevails above approximately 2000 m. The major peril stems from fresh snow drift accumulations which since yesterday have formed in western to northwestern to northern aspects under the influence of strong winds. Slab avalanches can be triggered in those places even by minimum additional loading, whereby the likelihood of triggering tends to increase with ascending altitude. Most of the avalanche prone locations are currently to be found in the regions which had heaviest snowfall if the southern Ötztal and Stubai Alps, the East Tirolean Tauern and the East Tirolean Dolomites. Caution is urged on all freshly drifted, very steep slopes, but particularly in northern to eastern to southwestern aspects. Visibility permitting, the danger spots can be easily recognized. Due to the rising temperatures, increasingly frequent snowslides can be expected on grassy slopes in the central part of the Northern Alps, as well as in the Arlberg and Ausserfern regions, in particular.

SNOW LAYERING

Winter is slowly making its entrance in Tirol, although the distribution of snow masses still varies greatly. Most of the snow is currently found in the regions of southern Ötztal and Stubai Alps, the central part of the Northern Alps and in East Tirol. The low temperatures of the past week have caused the often loosely packed new fallen snow to be massively transported by the strong winds. A potential bed surface for slab avalanches is the borderline between freshly deposited snow drift and the cold, loosely packed new fallen snow beneath it. At high altitudes and in high Alpine regions, particularly on shady, steep slopes and areas adjacent to ridge lines in the regions along the Main Alpine Ridge, slab avalanches can in isolated spots even release on the surface hoar (Nigg effect) and in small magnitude from the faceted crystals inside the old snowpack

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Mountain weather: heavy cloud and fog widespread, often sustained snowfall beginning initially in western regions, moving later on towards the Tauern, Dolomites and East Tirol. All in all, the Arlberg region and the bordering Upper Inn Valley will probably get the heaviest snowfall. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 5 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 12 degrees. Brisk winds, to begin with from the southwest, later on from the northwest. Trend for the coming days: as of Thursday, a genuinely wintery period will begin, probably with heavy snowfall, and continue through the weekend.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Fresh snow drift accumulations resulting from snowfall-plus-wind. The next update of the avalanche situation will be published as soon as the overall situation changes significantly, at latest on Friday.

DANGER PATTERNS (GM)

gm.6 - cold, loose, new fallen snow and wind
gm.2 - sliding snow
gm.8 - surface hoar blanketed with snow

Patrick Nairz **Translated by Jeffrey McCabe**