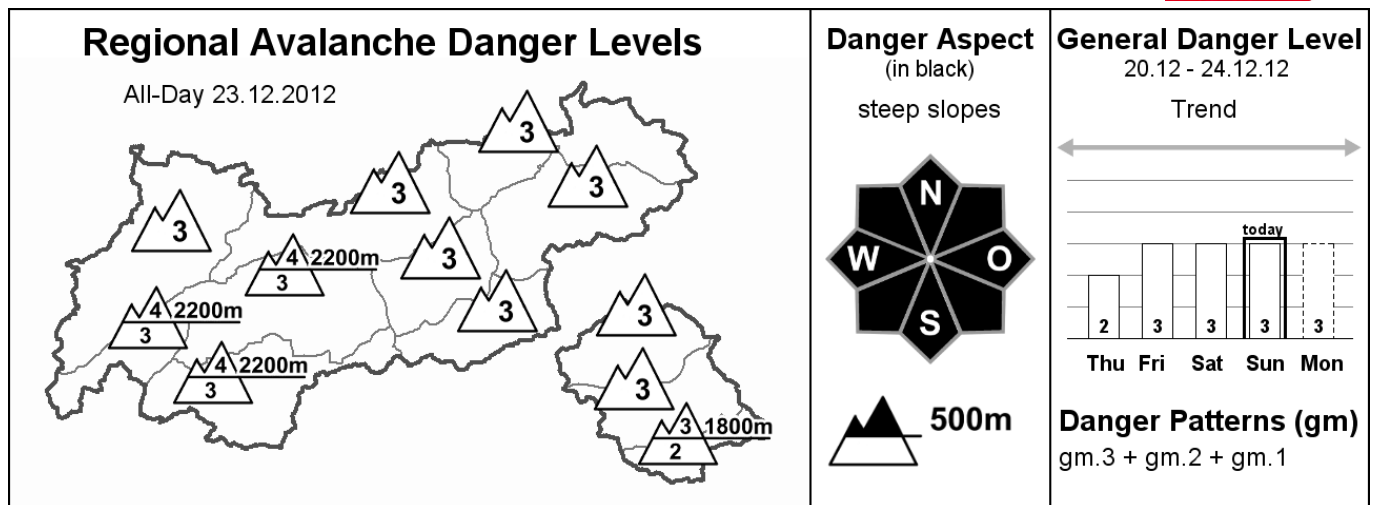


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Sunday, 23.12.2012, at 07:30



High avalanche danger regionally

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger has continued to increase and must now be declared as high above approximately 2200 m in the southern part of the Arlberg region, the Silvretta-Samnaun and the Ötztal and Stubai Alps. Due to the new fallen snow, the massive snow transport and the rising temperatures, we still expect naturally triggered avalanches today, especially this morning. These will fracture in the old snowpack above approximately 2200 m with increasing frequency on west to north to east facing slopes, in isolated cases also in shady forest border areas. Furthermore, due to the very strong wind at high altitudes, more fresh snow drift accumulations will form, which particularly above approximately 2400 m in areas adjacent to ridge lines and in very steep, leeward terrain can fracture at the point of contact between the drifted masses and the cold, loosely packed fresh fallen snow beneath it. In the regions where snow is deepest, in addition, full depth snowslides can release on steep, grass covered slopes.

SNOW LAYERING

Over the last 24 hours there has been snowfall in Tirol, in northern regions frequently as of 2000 m, in southern regions as of 1000 m. Most of the snow fell in the westernmost regions (30 - 50 cm) elsewhere there was generally 20 to 30 cm; in southern East Tirol only a few centimeters. At high altitudes a very strong westerly to northwesterly wind is blowing which is causing massive snow transport. The combination of fresh fallen snow, rising temperatures, strong winds and poor snow layering on west to north to east facing slopes above approximately 2200 m suggests that the snowpack will collapse and naturally triggered avalanches from the layer of depth hoar near the ground are likely. This applies to the regions south of a line drawn from Ausserfern over the Northern Alps to the Kitzbühel Alps. At higher altitudes, in addition, drifted snow masses can release at the borderline point of contact where they meet the cold, loosely packed new fallen snow.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Mountain weather today: During the morning, the last showers will slacken off, the fog draping the mountain flanks will disperse and conditions will improve. The light will be somewhat diffuse, amidst only high altitude cloud. Storm strength winds and very mild, the zero degree level at midday will be just under 3000 m. Temperature at 2000 m: plus 5 degrees; at 3000 m: zero degrees. Stormy westerly to northwesterly winds, in the Northern Alps they will reach gale strength. General weather: A warm front is embedded inside a northwesterly air current and is moving rapidly eastwards. As it does, the air will become drier. At the beginning of the new week, the airstream will shift to southwesterly and bring correspondingly milder air masses to Tirol.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

The avalanche danger will subside.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe