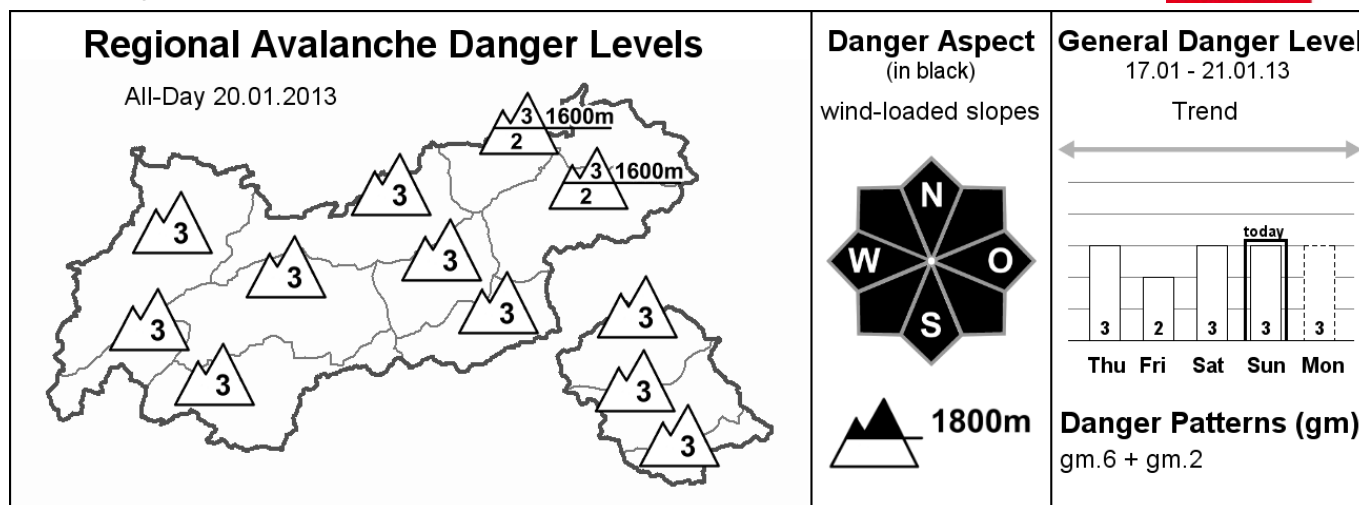


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Sunday, 20.01.2013, at 07:30



Very treacherous conditions in wind-exposed regions

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger has increased as a result of the storm strength winds: widespread to level 3, considerable. Thoroughly treacherous conditions prevail for backcountry skiers and freeriders. Freshly formed snow drift accumulations can easily be triggered in steep terrain, even by minimum additional loading. The drifted masses are found above the tree line, increasing in frequency with ascending altitude. Particularly in wind-exposed, very steep terrain above the tree line where until recently new fallen snow was deposited, fresh snowdrift can be naturally triggered. The released masses are generally of small to medium size. In wind protected terrain the situation is much better. Near ridgelines in extremely steep terrain, on freshly loaded, west-northwest to north to east-northeast facing slopes in the Ötztal and Stubai Alps as well as in Verwall above approximately 2300 m, naturally triggered avalanches cannot be ruled out. In addition, full depth snowslides at low and intermediate altitudes are possible on steep, grassy slopes.

SNOW LAYERING

Stormy winds immediately adjacent to terrain which is utterly windstill lead to a highly irregular snow distribution. One has to assume that the fresh snowdrift is in general quite poorly bonded with the cold, loosely packed fresh fallen snow beneath it. The snow cover at that point of contact of the two types of snow is extremely prone to triggering. In the old snowpack, especially in shady terrain above approximately 2300 m south of Ausserfern, the Northern and the Kitzbühel Alps where the snow is shallow, can be triggered through large additional loading. Between 2000 and 2400 m in East Tirol on sunny slopes, there are faceted, unbonded snow crystals beneath the thin melt-freeze crust.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Mountain weather today: foehn storms in the lanes exposed to them and on all exposed ridges. In addition, variable cloud; on the Main Alpine Ridge and southwards thereof, barrier cloud will be caught and accumulate, which will shroud the mountains this afternoon and cause light snowfall. In the Southern Alps, moderate snowfall later on today. Temperature at 2000 m: zero degrees; at 3000 m: minus 3 degrees. Strong to storm strength southerly to southwesterly winds. Weather in general: a low over the western Mediterranean is bringing mild and increasingly moist air masses from the south to the Alps. This front will move towards the Adriatic Sea tomorrow, bringing precipitation to the southern flank of the Alps in particular.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Snow drift accumulations will remain prone to triggering for a time

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe