



DANGER PATTERNS (DP): [dp.6 - cold, loose, new fallen snow and wind](#); [dp.8 - surface hoar blanketed with snow](#); [dp.4 - cold following warm / warm following cold](#)

High avalanche danger in East Tirol, southern Stubai and (presently) Ötztal and Zillertal Alps

AVALANCHE DANGER

In East Tirol and the southern Stubai Alps high avalanche danger generally prevails due to the masses of recent snowfall. Over the course of the day the danger level in the Ötztal and Zillertal Alps will also rise to high (4). We expect many medium sized, in isolated cases also large sized, avalanches to trigger naturally. Dry slab avalanches can fracture in all aspects, most frequently in steep, leeward starting zones on W to N to E facing slopes above the treeline. At low and intermediate altitudes in East Tirol, furthermore, snow on steep, grass-covered slopes can release as full depth snowslides. Such avalanches can also attain large size. Due to ongoing, very heavy snowfall still to come, the situation will remain tense, the frequency of naturally triggered avalanches is expected to increase over the course of the day. In remaining North Tirol west of the Ötztal Alps and north of the Main Alpine Ridge, the situation is much better, comparatively speaking: the hazards there are considerable above the treeline, moderate below the treeline. Skiers and freeriders should nonetheless ski defensively, since recently formed snowdrift accumulations can still be triggered by minimum additional loading.

SNOW LAYERING

In southern East Tirol there has been 85 cm of snowfall since early this morning, in the southern Stubai Alps up to 60 cm already today, accompanied by strong high-altitude southerly winds. Inside the snowpack lie potentially threatening layers at the uppermost reaches of the old snowpack from which avalanches could easily trigger: loosely packed powder; surface hoar covered by new fallen snow; faceted snow crystals atop thin melt-freeze crusts, which have formed since the beginning of this week and are increasingly evident on very steep, sunny slopes. In the regions along the Main Alpine Ridge, avalanches could even trigger from layers near to the ground if today's snowfall is heavy enough.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Mountain weather today: the Main Alpine Ridge and Southern Alps are caught in dense cloud cover and snowfall which will be heavy from the southern Dolomites over the Carnic Alps up to the East Tirolean Tauern. Enormous masses of fresh fallen snow are anticipated. The Northern Alps will remain by and large dry with bright spells. Temperature at 2000m: -1 degree; at 3000m -6 degrees. Brisk southerly winds in western regions; in easterly regions winds will attain strong to storm-force velocity.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Extremely tense avalanche situation in southern regions!

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe