



Beware fresh snowdrift in steep, shady ridgeline terrain above about 2500 m

AVALANCHE DANGER

The potential avalanche danger is currently limited to the regions along the Main Alpine Ridge and in East Tirol above about 2500 m, where the increasingly strong southwesterly winds are transporting the snowfall from early in the week. This snowdrift is to some extent poorly bonded with the old snowpack, particularly in steep, W-NW to N to E-NO facing ridgeline terrain. This is a result of the surface hoar which is now snowed over on steep ridgeline slopes. In those places, even minimum additional loading is sufficient to trigger a small slab avalanche. The major peril stems from freshly drifted snow masses, which with some experience in avalanche evaluation can be recognized and circumvented.

SNOW LAYERING

Snow distribution varies highly throughout Tirol. In northern regions there is only little snow, most of it on steep, shady slopes above the tree line. In the regions along the Main Alpine Ridge, and in East Tirol, wintery conditions prevail above about 2200 m. On the glaciers snow depths are 2 m. The old snowpack is well consolidated and stable in general. Weak layers inside it are most likely in the layers nearest to the uppermost surface, particularly in the form of surface hoar, which formed on shady, steep ridgeline slopes at high altitudes and was blanketed by fresh fallen snow at the beginning of the week. Now, fresher snowdrift covers this combination, creating a layer which is prone to triggering. In addition, in high alpine regions fresh snowdrift can be triggered at the borderline to the loosely packed powder snow which lies beneath it.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Weather in general: A powerful low pressure zone over northern Europe has given rise to a strong and precipitation-free westerly to southwesterly airstream. In North Tirol, foehn conditions are arising, bringing mild air. Over the weekend no significant change. Mountain weather today: strong winds and sunshine, good visibility in the dry air. Southwesterly foehn winds will make the temperatures climb at all altitudes, accompanied by some foehn clouds which could veil the summits. Temperature at 2000 m: 0 degrees; at 3000 m: -8 degrees. Strong southwesterly winds, to some extent reaching storm strength on the Main Alpine Ridge and in the classic foehn-exposed ranges of North Tirol.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

The major peril comes from fresh snowdrift. The next bulletin will be published tomorrow, 13.12.2014.

DANGER PATTERNS (DP)

[dp.8 - surface hoar blanketed with snow](#)

[dp.6 - loose snow and wind](#)

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