

DANGER PATTERNS (DP): dp.10 - springtime szenario dp.6 - loose snow and wind

Final Avalanche Bulletin of the season. Increasingly springlike conditions.

AVALANCHE DANGER

After a deep-wintery phase, spring is returning. Avalanche danger is again subject to a daytime danger cycle. Following a clear night of star-studded skies, low danger prevails during the morning below about 2800m; moderate danger above that altitude. During the day, danger above the treeline will rise generally to moderate. Two perils threaten: in high alpine regions, recently formed snowdrifts (primarily on very steep NW/N/E facing ridgeline slopes) can be triggered, mostly by large additional loading. Then, solar radiation and rising temperatures during the day will make the snowpack thoroughly wet, the recent layer of new fallen snow will lose its firmness. Then, increasingly frequent loose snowslides and small avalanches can be expected on extremely steep, sunny slopes as of midday.

SNOW LAYERING

The snow cover was able to settle and stabilise yesterday despite wintery temperatures, including drifts which are now unlikely to trigger except in very steep, high alpine terrain. The still loosely-packed layer of powder snow is a potential bed surface for fracturing avalances, now blanketed by drifts. There are also thin layers of graupel near the upper surface, and the beginnings of faceted snow crystal formation above the layer of dust from the Sahara. Snowpack analysis does not reveal a higher degree of trigger sensitivity in these layers, however. Furthermore, the uppermost layers will presumably continue to bond with the snowpack.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Weather in general: the air current is shifting to westerly, then on Saturday to southwesterly, bringing drier and milder air masses to the Alps. On Sunday, a low over the western Mediterranean will deteriorate the fine weather conditions in the Alps. Mountain weather today: sunny, good visibility, some convective cloud build-up this afternoon. In East and South Tirol, high altitude fogbanks hover to about 2000m, cloudbanks above that. South of the Main Alpine Ridge, a mixture of sunshine and convective cloud. Temperature at 2000m, rising from -4 to +1 degree; at 3000m, from -11 to -7 degrees. Light winds.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

For further information, please check our blog: lawine.tirol->Blog. Many thanks to all for their valuable reports and observations during the winter season.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe