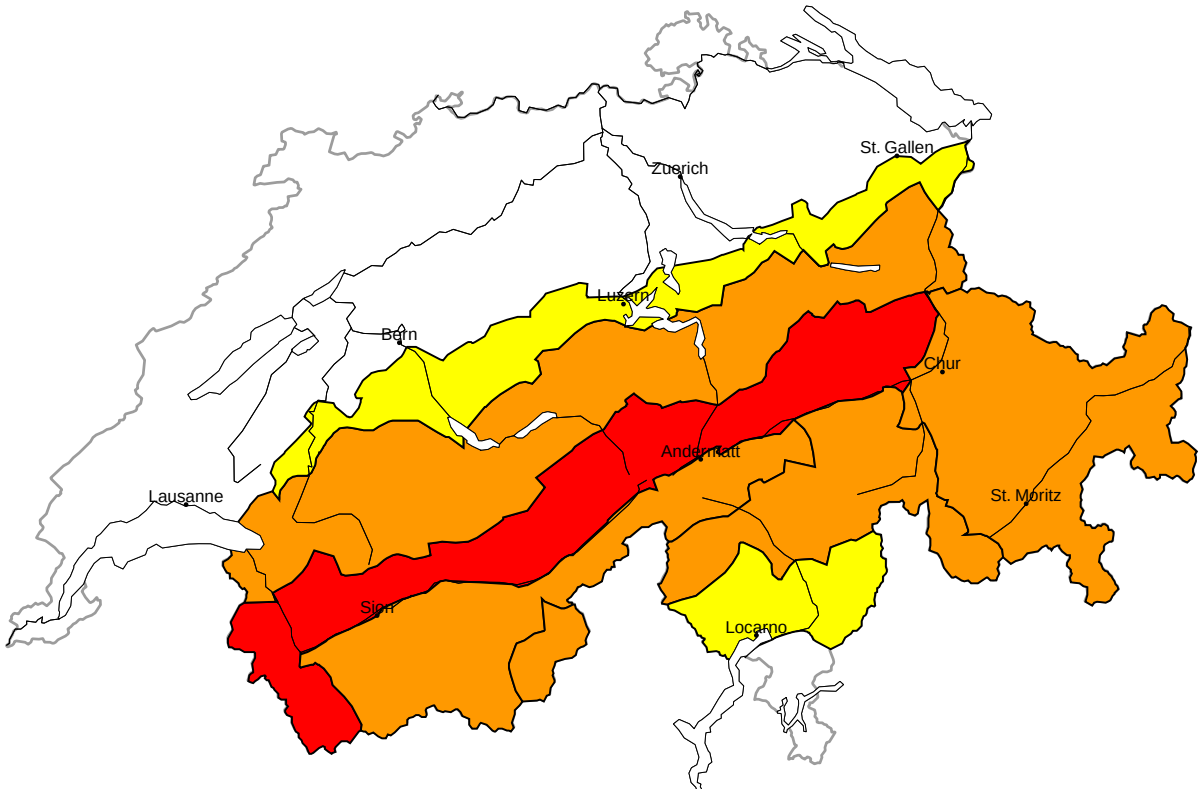
Avalanche bulletin through Thursday, 14. December 2023

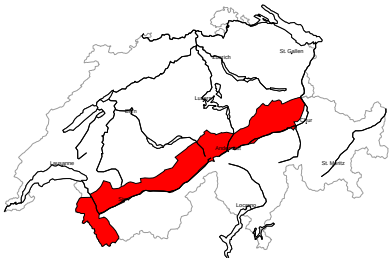
Avalanche danger

updated on 13.12.2023, 17:00



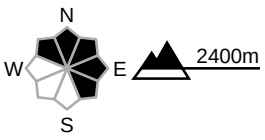
region A

High (4-)



New snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The large quantity of fresh snow and the deep wind slabs formed by the westerly wind are prone to triggering. Natural avalanches are to be expected. In their paths avalanches can entrain the wet snow. They can reach very large size. In the typical avalanche paths the avalanches can reach valley bottoms at relatively high altitudes and endanger transportation routes that are exposed.
Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches easily. The conditions are very critical for winter sport activities outside marked and open pistes.

Considerable (3)

Gliding snow

Below approximately 2400 m more gliding avalanches are to be expected, even large ones in isolated cases. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided. Exposed parts of transportation routes can be endangered.

Danger levels 1 low 2 moderate 3 considerable 4 high 5 very high

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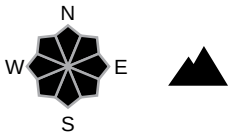
region B — Considerable (3+)

New snow, Gliding snow

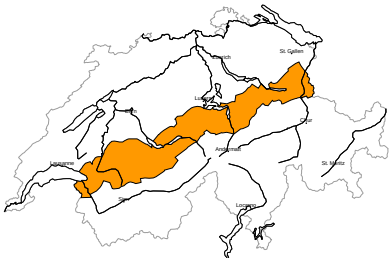
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

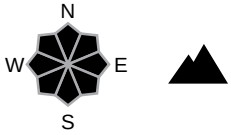
The avalanche prone locations for dry avalanches are to be found on steep slopes above approximately 2200 m. The large quantity of fresh snow and the deep wind slabs formed by the westerly wind are prone to triggering. Natural avalanches are possible. In their paths avalanches can entrain the wet snow. They can reach very large size. In the typical avalanche paths the avalanches can in isolated cases reach valley bottoms at relatively high altitudes and endanger transportation routes that are exposed.
Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches easily. The conditions are critical for winter sport activities outside marked and open pistes.
Below approximately 2200 m more gliding avalanches are to be expected, even large ones in isolated cases. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided. Exposed parts of transportation routes can be endangered.

region C — Considerable (3+)



New snow, Gliding snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The avalanche prone locations for dry avalanches are to be found on steep slopes above approximately 2000 m. The large quantity of fresh snow and the deep wind slabs formed by the westerly wind are prone to triggering. Natural avalanches are possible. In their paths avalanches can entrain the wet snow. They can reach very large size. In the typical avalanche paths the avalanches can in isolated cases reach valley bottoms at relatively high altitudes and endanger transportation routes that are exposed.
Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches easily. The conditions are critical for winter sport activities outside marked and open pistes.
Below approximately 2200 m more gliding avalanches are to be expected, even large ones in isolated cases. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided. Exposed parts of transportation routes can be endangered.

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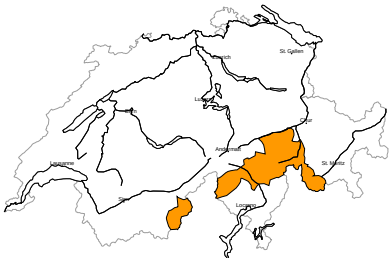
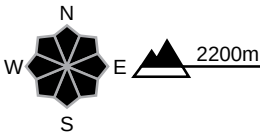
region D

Considerable (3=)



Wind slab, Persistent weak layers

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The fresh snow of the last few days and the wind slabs are lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack at elevated altitudes. Single winter sport participants can release avalanches. These can be triggered in the old snowpack and reach medium size.
Ski touring calls for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger.

Moderate (2)

Gliding snow

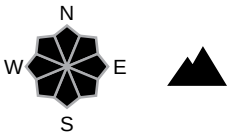
In all aspects small to medium-sized gliding avalanches are possible below approximately 2200 m. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

region E

Considerable (3=)

New snow, Gliding snow

Avalanche prone locations

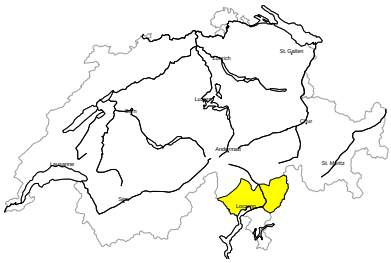


Danger description

The avalanche prone locations for dry avalanches are to be found on steep slopes above approximately 2200 m. The fresh snow and in particular the wind slabs can be released by a single winter sport participant in some cases. The avalanches can reach medium size.
Defensive route selection is advisable.
Below approximately 2200 m gliding avalanches are possible, in particular medium-sized ones. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

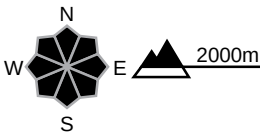
region F

Moderate (2=)



No distinct avalanche problem

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Avalanches can in some cases be released in near-surface layers. They can in isolated cases release deeper layers of the snowpack and reach medium size. The avalanche prone locations are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain.
Careful route selection is recommended.

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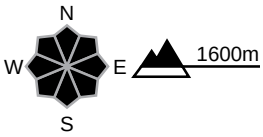
region G

Moderate (2-)

New snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Only a little snow is lying. The old snowpack will be wet all the way through.
The fresh snow and the mostly small wind slabs can be released in isolated cases at elevated altitudes. Apart from the danger of being buried, restraint should be exercised in particular in view of the danger of avalanches sweeping people along and giving rise to falls.

Low (1)

Gliding snow

On very steep grassy slopes individual gliding avalanches are possible.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 13.12.2023, 17:00

Snowpack

With rain to high altitudes and snowfall and wind on top of this, avalanches, some of them large, occurred in particular in Valais and on the northern flank of the Alps. At high altitudes, there is about twice as much snow in many areas as there normally is at the beginning of December. The snowpack structure there is generally favourable. In the south, snow depths are below average and older weak layers may be released by people in some cases.
At intermediate altitudes, the snowpack has been weakened by the rain. It is increasingly stabilising as a consequence of falling temperatures, but gliding avalanches are still to be expected on slippery ground below 2000 m.

Observed weather review Wednesday, 13.12.2023

It was very cloudy with heavy precipitation at times. The snowfall level only dropped from around 2000 m to around 1200 to 1600 m as the day progressed.

Fresh snow
From Tuesday afternoon to Wednesday afternoon, the following amounts of fresh snow fell above approximately 1800 m:
- Northern Alpine Ridge west of the Aare, extreme west of Lower Valais: 30 to 60 cm;
- rest of Valais, rest of the northern flank of the Alps, Gotthard region and Grisons: 15 to 30 cm;
- less elsewhere.

This means that the following snowfall has been registered above approximately 2500 m since the precipitation started on Sunday:

- Northern Alpine Ridge and extreme west of Lower Valais: 70 to 110 cm;
- rest of Valais and Gotthard region: 40 to 70 cm;
- elsewhere, widely 20 to 40 cm, less in the far south.

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m, between -2 °C in the north and 0 °C in the south.

Wind
Winds were mostly moderate from the west.

Weather forecast through Thursday, 14.12.2023

In the north, it will remain very cloudy with precipitation. The snowfall level will drop to low altitudes. It will be mostly sunny in the south.

Fresh snow
From Wednesday afternoon to Thursday afternoon, the following amounts of fresh snow are anticipated above approximately 1500 m:

- extreme west of Lower Valais and Northern Alpine Ridge: 20 to 30 cm, locally up to 40 cm;
- rest of the northern flank of the Alps, rest of Lower Valais, northern Grisons, Samnaun: 10 to 20 cm;
- less elsewhere.

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m, between -4 °C in the north and -1 °C in the south.

Wind
- During the night, winds will be mostly moderate from the northwest.
- During the day, they will turn to the north and will be increasingly strong on the Main Alpine Ridge.

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Outlook through Saturday, 16.12.2023

Friday

On Friday afternoon, the precipitation will end and it will become sunny from the west. It will be sunny all day in the south. Winds will be moderate, blowing strongly from northerly directions on the Main Alpine Ridge and south of it.
In the north, the avalanche danger will decrease. As a consequence of solar radiation, numerous loose snow avalanches are to be expected from the new fallen snow. In the south, the avalanche danger will not change significantly.

Saturday

On Saturday it will be sunny and mild. The zero-degree level will rise to 2800 m in the west.
In the north, the avalanche danger will decrease further. It will not change significantly in the south.