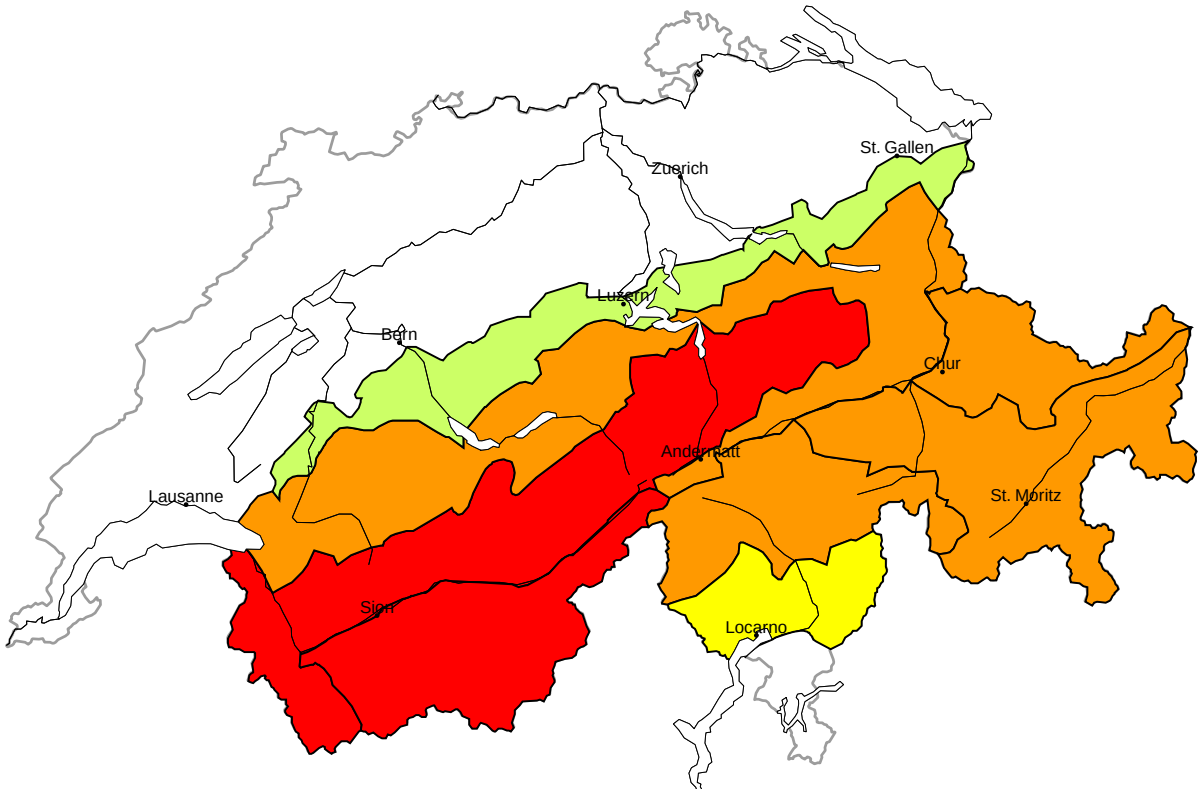
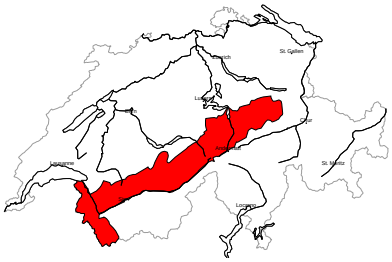
Avalanche danger

updated on 11.12.2023, 17:00

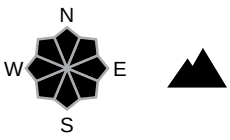


region A — High (4-)



New snow, Wet snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The avalanche prone locations for dry avalanches are to be found in all aspects above approximately 2200 m. The large quantity of fresh snow and also in particular the wind slabs that are being formed by the strong 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 isolated cases. 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. As a consequence of the rain medium-sized and, in isolated cases, large wet and gliding avalanches are to be expected below approximately 2200 m.

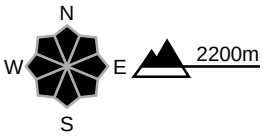
Danger levels 1 low 2 moderate 3 considerable 4 high 5 very high

region B

High (4-)

New snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The large quantity of fresh snow and also in particular the wind slabs that are being formed by the strong westerly wind are prone to triggering. Natural avalanches are still to be expected in particular during the night. In their paths avalanches can entrain the wet snow. They can reach very large size in isolated cases. In the typical avalanche paths the avalanches can reach as far as the valley bottom 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.

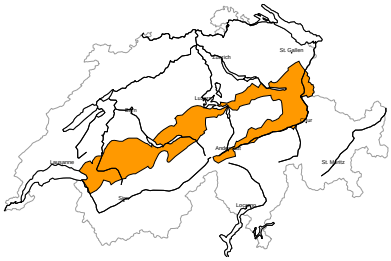
Considerable (3)

Wet snow, Gliding snow

As a consequence of the rain medium-sized and, in isolated cases, large wet and gliding avalanches are to be expected below approximately 2200 m. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

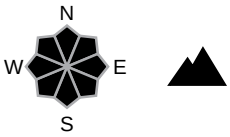
region C

Considerable (3+)



New snow, Wet snow

Avalanche prone locations

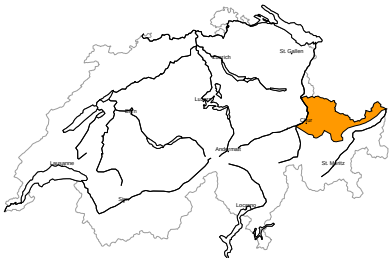


Danger description

Avalanche prone locations for dry avalanches are to be found in all aspects above approximately 2200 m. The large quantity of fresh snow and also in particular the wind slabs that are being formed by the strong westerly wind are prone to triggering. Avalanches can be released, even by a single winter sport participant and reach large size in isolated cases. Natural avalanches are possible. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for caution and restraint.
As a consequence of the heavy rain wet avalanches are to be expected. These avalanche prone locations are to be found in all aspects below approximately 2200 m.
On steep grassy slopes gliding avalanches are to be expected at any time, in particular medium-sized ones. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

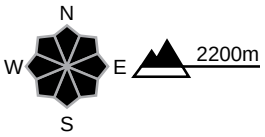
region D

Considerable (3+)



New snow

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The large quantity of fresh snow and also in particular the wind slabs to be found at elevated altitudes are prone to triggering. Avalanches can be released, even by a single winter sport participant and reach large size in isolated cases. Natural avalanches are possible. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for caution and restraint.

Moderate (2)

Wet snow, Gliding snow

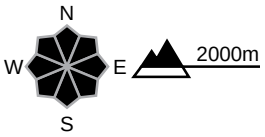
Below approximately 2200 m wet and gliding avalanches are possible, in particular medium-sized ones. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

region E

Considerable (3+)

New snow, Persistent weak layers

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

The new snow of Monday is lying on top of a weakly bonded old snowpack. Even single winter sport participants can release avalanches easily, including dangerously large ones. Whumpfing sounds and the formation of shooting cracks when stepping on the snowpack can indicate the danger. Remotely triggered avalanches are possible.
Ski touring calls for caution and restraint.

Moderate (2)

Gliding snow

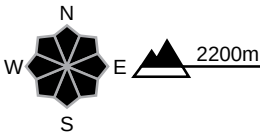
In all aspects small to medium-sized gliding avalanches are possible below approximately 2200 m. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

region F

Considerable (3=)

Wind slab

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Fresh and somewhat older wind slabs can be released by a single winter sport participant. Additionally avalanches can also penetrate deep layers and reach medium size. These avalanche prone locations are barely recognisable. Experience in the assessment of avalanche danger is required.

Moderate (2)

Wet snow, Gliding snow

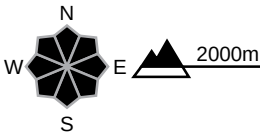
Below approximately 2200 m wet and gliding avalanches are possible, in particular medium-sized ones. Areas with glide cracks are to be avoided.

region G

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.

region H

Low (1)

Gliding snow, Wet snow

Only a little snow is lying. As a consequence of the rain gliding avalanches and wet snow slides are possible in all altitude zones. Mostly the avalanches are small.

Snowpack and weather

updated on 11.12.2023, 17:00

Snowpack

With rain to high altitudes and snowfall and wind above, avalanches, some of them large, occurred in Valais in particular, but also elsewhere 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 has a favourable structure, apart from thin weak layers of angular crystals deep in the snowpack in the area of older rain crusts. With all the new fallen snow and heavy rain, these weak layers may be reactivated. In the south, the snow depths are below average and the weak layers are therefore closer to the surface. Especially there, the older weak layers may be released, including by people in some cases.
In all regions and in all aspects, more gliding avalanches are to be expected below approximately 2400 m on slippery ground.

Observed weather review Monday, 11.12.2023

It was very cloudy with precipitation. This was heavy during the day in the west and north. The snowfall level in the north and far west was between 2200 and 2400 m, and elsewhere between 1400 and 2000 m.

Fresh snow
From Sunday afternoon to Monday afternoon, the following amounts of fresh snow fell above approximately 2600 m:

- Lower Valais, Northern Alpine Ridge and central part of the Main Alpine Ridge: 30 to 50 cm;
- other parts of Valais, Prättigau to Samnaun, as well as the highest peaks north of the Northern Alpine Ridge: 20 to 30 cm;
- less elsewhere.

Temperature
At middle at 2000 m, between +3 °C in the northwest and around +1 °C in the southeast.

Wind
The westerly wind was:
- strong to storm force in western and northern areas;
- in Grisons and Ticino, mostly moderate and locally strong.

Weather forecast through Tuesday, 12.12.2023

It will be very cloudy with precipitation, sometimes heavy in the west and north. The snowfall level will initially drop slightly and then rise again to 2200 m in the west and 1800 m in the southeast.

Fresh snow
Until Tuesday afternoon, the following amounts of fresh snow are anticipated above approximately 2500 m:

- Northern Alpine Ridge and extreme west of Lower Valais: 20 to 30 cm, and up to 40 cm along the border with France and from the eastern Bernese Oberland to Central Switzerland;
- rest of Valais and northern Prättigau: 10 to 20 cm;
- less elsewhere.

In the Prealps and Jura, all the precipitation will fall as rain.

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m, between +3 °C in the northwest and +1 °C in the southeast.

Wind
Moderate to strong westerly winds will blow on the northern flank of the Alps and generally at high altitudes.

Avalanche bulletin through Tuesday, 12. December 2023

Outlook through Thursday, 14.12.2023

It will remain very cloudy with precipitation. Most precipitation will fall in the west on Wednesday with moderate to strong westerly winds, then mainly in the north on Thursday with northwesterly winds. The snowfall level will drop rapidly from 1800 m to around 1000 to 1400 m. From Tuesday afternoon to Thursday afternoon, 40 to 60 cm of snow will fall on the Northern Alpine Ridge and in Lower Valais; 20 to 40 cm in the other regions of the northern flank of the Alps, Valais and northern Grisons and in the western Jura; less elsewhere.
The avalanche danger will decrease slightly on Wednesday, except in the far west. It will increase again slightly in the north on Thursday.
In the other regions of Grisons and in the south, the avalanche danger will not change significantly.