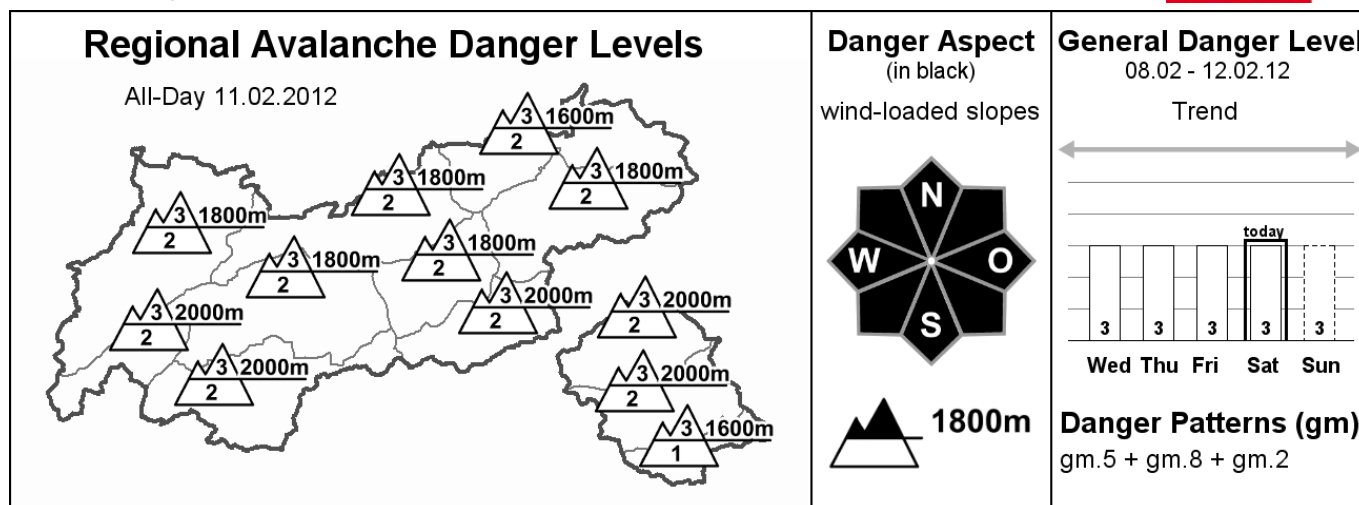


# Avalanche Bulletin

## of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Saturday, 11.02.2012, at 07:30



### Backcountry tourers, beware: fresh snowdrift can be easily triggered

#### AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche danger still varies in direct proportion to wind influence. Above the treeline, where the wind impact has been great recently, considerable danger prevails; below that altitude, where wind has exercised far less influence, the danger level is moderate. Recently formed snowdrift accumulations are the major peril: even in moderately steep terrain, they can be triggered with ease by minimum additional loading. Caution: even hard snowpack surfaces capable of supporting loads are riddled with tensions. This has been confirmed by several recent avalanches involving people, as well as a number of naturally triggered avalanches. Snowdrift masses occur frequently in south to west to north facing ridgeline areas, as well as gullies and bowls in all aspects. With experience in evaluating avalanche hazards, these danger zones are easily discernible. In the fewer and fewer wind protected zones, the situation is much better. An additional danger remains: full depth snowslides which, despite low temperatures, can be released on steep, grassy slopes and easily attain medium size.

#### SNOW LAYERING

Recently drifted snow is, in general, poorly bonded with the old snowpack, which now often consists of loosely packed, faceted snow crystals. Surface hoar blanketed over with light, dry snowfall and snowdrift also occurs often. Thus, in all areas subject to wind, the snowpack is poorly structured. The numerous shooting cracks and settling noises, together with our snow profile analysis, corroborate this. The fundament of the snowpack, on the other hand, is compact by and large; only in high alpine areas is there a fundament of depth hoar, but this is unlikely to trigger.

#### ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

Weather in general: The Alps are wedged between a high pressure bridge in the north and a low pressure system over the Mediterranean; they lie in the path of a persistent, cold, easterly air current. Parts of Tirol will be brushed by the edges of this Mediterranean low from the southeast today. Mountain weather today: below altitudes of 1500 - 2000 m, clouds will initially dominate from which there may be a small amount of snowfall. Better visibility is guaranteed above that altitude, with the most sunshine towards the Lechtal Alps. This afternoon, high altitude clouds will prevail; it will be increasingly cloudy on the southern flank of the Alps, possibly accompanied by light snowfall this afternoon in the Dolomites and in East Tirol. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 20 to minus 17 degrees; at 3000 m: minus 20 degrees. Moderate to brisk easterly winds.

#### SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

The rule of thumb: consequently avoid snowdrift accumulations

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe