

Avalanche News

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

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CAUTION TOWARDS SNOWSLIDES ON STEEP, GRASSY HILLSIDES

AVALANCHE DANGER

In North Tyrol over the next few days, caution must be exercised towards the possible dangers of snowslides on steep, grassy hillsides. Full depth snowslides are preceded by glide cracks in the snowpack, so-called fish-mouths. Since the moment of release is not foreseeable, areas below such cracks should be avoided whenever possible. Elsewhere, loosely packed snow avalanches on extremely steep, sun-bathed slopes are possible. Slab avalanches are not yet a threat, as there is no weak inner snow layer, although freshly drifted snow in steep areas adjacent to ridge lines should be assessed with caution.

SNOW LAYERING

Over the course of the last three days, winter has returned with a bang. Most of the snowfall was in the Northern Alps, the Arlberg and Ausserfern regions and along the Main Alpine Ridge. Overall snow depths at 2000 m are currently between 75 and 110 cm; in the remaining regions of North Tyrol generally 50 cm; in East Tyrol the amounts of snow recede sharply towards the south. As is usual for the season, there are still no weak layers in the snowpack. However, smooth and steep terrain, e.g. grassy hillsides or smooth stones, can provide bed surfaces for avalanches. The snowpack is expected to quickly lose its depth, particularly on sun-bathed slopes.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

General weather conditions: wedged between a high above the North Sea and a low above Eastern Europe, very cold, moist air is streaming towards the Alps. Mountain weather today: deep winter temperatures. On North Tyrol's peaks, clouds and snow showers, especially from the Karwendel over the Kitzbühel Alps as far as the Hohe Tauern, dominate the weather. In the Dolomites it is sunny. Temperatures at 2000 m: minus 8 degrees, at 3000 m: minus 15 degrees. Strong northwesterly winds.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

The danger of full depth snowslides will continue to prevail over the next few days, but is then expected to subside, in line with the season. The next report will be published when there is a sharp change in the avalanche situation.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe