

European Avalanche Hazard Scale

Degree of Hazard	Snowpack Stability	Avalanche Probability	Effects on Traffic & Residential Areas; Recommendations	Effects on Off-Piste & Back-Country Activities; Recommendations
1: Low	The snowpack is generally well bonded and stable.	Triggering is possible only with high additional loads ¹ on a few very steep extreme slopes ² . Only a few small natural ⁴ avalanches (sluffs) possible.	No hazard from avalanches.	Virtually no restrictions on off-piste & back-country skiing & travel.
2: Moderate	The snowpack is moderately well bonded on some ³ steep ³ slopes, otherwise generally well bonded.	Triggering is possible with high additional loads ¹ , particularly on the steep ³ slopes indicated in the bulletin. Large natural ⁴ avalanches not likely.	Virtually no hazard from natural avalanches	Generally favourable conditions. Routes should still be selected with care, especially on steep ³ slopes of the aspect ⁴ and altitude indicated.
3: Considerable	The snowpack is moderately to weakly bonded on many ³ steep ³ slopes.	Triggering is possible, sometimes even with low additional loads ¹ . The bulletin may indicate many slopes which are particularly affected. In certain conditions, medium and occasionally large sized natural ⁴ avalanches may occur.	Traffic and individual buildings in hazardous areas are at risk in certain cases. Precautions should be taken in these areas.	Off-piste and back-country skiing and travel should only be carried out by experienced persons able to evaluate avalanche hazard. Steep ³ slopes of the aspect ⁴ and altitude indicated should be avoided.
4: High	The snowpack is weakly bonded in most ³ places.	Triggering is probable even with low additional loads ¹ on many steep ³ slopes. In some conditions, frequent medium or large sized natural ⁴ avalanches are likely.	Avalanches may be of large magnitude. In hazardous areas, closure of road and other transport is recommended in some circumstances.	Off-piste and back-country skiing and travel should be restricted to low-angled slopes; areas at the bottom of slopes may also be hazardous.
5: Very high	The snowpack is generally weakly bonded and largely unstable.	Numerous large natural ⁴ avalanches are likely, even on moderately steep terrain.	Extensive safety measures (closures and evacuation) are necessary.	No off-piste or back country skiing or travel should be undertaken.

Notes: ¹ Generally described in more detail in the avalanche bulletin (e.g. altitude, slope aspect, type of terrain, etc.).

¹ **Additional load:** high - e.g. group of skiers, piste machine, avalanche blasting.
low - e.g. skier, walker.

² **Steep slopes:** slopes with an incline of more than 30°.

³ **Steep extreme slopes:** those which are particularly unfavourable in terms of the incline, terrain profile, proximity to ridge, smoothness of underlying ground surface.

⁴ **Aspect:** compass bearing directly down the slope.

⁴ **Natural:** Without human assistance.