MOUNT WASHINGTON AVALANCHE CENTER

Avalanche Forecast for Sunday, January, 6, 2019
This forecast expires at midnight.

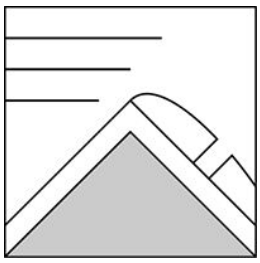
The Bottom Line

Avalanche danger will increase today as snowfall and wind create new wind slabs in our terrain. As snow is transported, the likelihood of human-triggered avalanches will rise along with the potential for natural avalanches driving our **CONSIDERABLE** rating for today's avalanche problem. Exposed melt-freeze crusts and older unreactive wind slabs do exist, providing opportunities to avoid traveling through the avalanche problem, though bear in mind these are isolated and may be directly under significant loading taking place above.

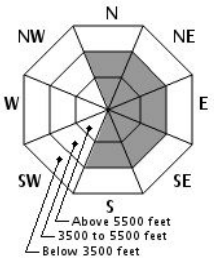
Mountain Weather

Temperatures on the summit reached 31F yesterday with all elevations below going above freezing under cloudy skies. Today will feel much more like typical early January as a cold front passes, with NW wind increasing from a current 50 mph to sustained 75 mph by dark. Temperatures will drop through the day to around 0F. Snow showers today may bring up to a total of 4" by midnight, with up to 2" by midday.

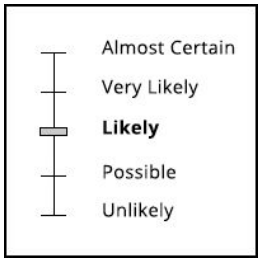
Primary Avalanche Problem



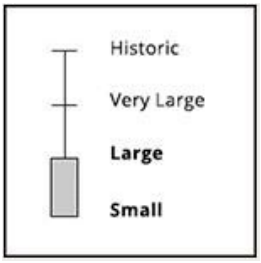
Wind Slab



Aspect/Elevation



Likelihood



Size

Prime wind loading speeds from the NW plus potentially more snow (2-4") may combine to create touchy new wind slab in leeward locations as well as cross-loading on many slopes. Snowfall totals come with a degree of uncertainty today, though some snow leftover from Thursday's storm remains available for transport above many start zones. Today's new wind slab will form on soft older wind slab in many locations, increasing the amount of snow the could be entrained in an avalanche. Today's ratings are based both on the potential to trigger an avalanche in snow that arrives today as well as the potential size that could be produced in our terrain.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Our terrain has a drastically different snowpack depending on aspect. Wind slab that formed late this past week can be found on the eastern half of the compass. This cohesive slab can mostly be found above a less cohesive layer, though has proven unwilling to propagate a crack. That being said, skiers in steep terrain found significant sluffing yesterday, leading us to believe an avalanche that starts small has the potential to entrain a large amount of snow. This soft snow will also be moved further downslope into lower start zones today. Slopes with westerly aspects have been scoured to rain crusts and hold very little, if any, avalanche danger.

Please Remember:

- Safe travel in avalanche terrain requires training and experience. This advisory is just one tool to help you make your own decisions in avalanche terrain. You control your own risk by choosing where, when, and how you travel.
- Anticipate a changing avalanche danger when actual weather differs from the higher summits forecast.
- For more information contact the Forest Service Snow Rangers, the AMC at the Pinkham Notch Visitor Center, or the caretakers at Hermit Lake Shelters or at the Harvard Cabin.

Helon Hoffer, Snow Ranger; USDA Forest Service, White Mountain National Forest; (603)466-2713 TTY (603)466-2858

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