

Avalanche Advisory for Thursday, January 16, 2014

Expires tonight at 12:00 midnight

This Advisory expires at midnight.

Tuckerman Ravine has MODERATE avalanche danger. Natural avalanches are unlikely and human triggered avalanches are possible. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully to identify features of concern. The only exceptions to this are the Lobster Claw, Right Gully, the Lower Snowfields and the Little Headwall which have Low avalanche danger. Natural and human triggered avalanches are unlikely except in isolated terrain features.

Huntington Ravine has LOW avalanche danger. Natural and human triggered avalanches are unlikely except in isolated terrain features. Some of these pockets do exist so keep your eyes open for isolated instabilities.

AVALANCHE PROBLEM: Today's avalanche problem is Wind Slab. New snow fell at upper elevations on Tuesday with prevailing winds from the W and NW causing new slab to be deposited in the Ravines. This has had limited impact on Huntington, which has very thin snow and ice coverage. Of all locations you will find the most prominent example of wind slabs in Tuckerman's Center Bowl over to the Lip.

WEATHER: Following the 3-7" (7-17.5cm) of new snow that fell on Tuesday we have only received 0.5" (1.25cm). A beautiful day yesterday, with copious sun, let temperatures in avalanche terrain break the freezing mark hitting between 32-34F (0 to2C). This has helped new areas of slab consolidate a bit before the mercury fell again overnight. Additionally a thick cloud cloak has entombed the upper mountain which will make visibility challenging. Temperatures will be in the teens F with a light to moderate W wind from 15-35mph (24-56kph), shifting later from the SW. A light snow shower is also expected this afternoon.

SNOWPACK: Tuesday's new snow developed into some thin slabs, particularly in Tuckerman, due to moderate W winds. Some warm temperatures yesterday helped settle instabilities and I would consider most areas posted at Moderate to have increased in strength from 24 hours ago. As we move into the weekend some reasonable weather is expected. However on Sunday temperatures will fall with an increased wind. This is the next most likely time frame for an increasing avalanche trend due to snow still available for transport in the alpine zone. We'll watch this potential and keep you up to date. Ultimately, our existing snowpack harbors some new wind slab problems but generally the mountain is thin. Imagine being a Firefighter sitting at the station, waiting, waiting, rotating through shifts... waiting..... well that's what it's like being a Snow Ranger in January of 2014. Pray for us.

OTHER HAZARDS: Expect a lot of water ice on Mt. Washington, right from the moment you get out of your vehicle. These slick conditions are now hidden by a veneer of new snow. The Tuckerman Trail from Pinkham and the Sherburne Ski Trail has an astounding amount of ice. I recommend traction devices for your feet and poles to help you keep your balance.

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 the Harvard Cabin.
- **Posted 830 a.m. Thursday January 16, 2014. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

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