

General Advisory for Tuckerman and Huntington Ravines

Posted 7:45 a.m. Monday May 5, 2014
Expires 12:00 midnight, Wednesday May 7, 2014

Tuckerman and Huntington Ravines are under a late season General Avalanche Advisory. You will need to do your own snow stability assessments when traveling in avalanche terrain. General Advisories are valid for no more than three days, but may be updated earlier as conditions warrant.

Spring weather in the mountains can take many forms. Lately we have been seeing snow as the dominant precipitation type at upper elevations. On Sunday the summit Observatory reported 8" of new snow, with another 1-3" forecast through Monday. In mid-winter, weather like this could easily trigger numerous slab avalanches. At this time of the year, there are factors at play that can help keep the snow in place on the slopes (e.g. rough bed surfaces, temperatures), but these features can be quickly buried and negated by sufficient snow and wind. Snow stability can move quickly in either direction in this situation. This is where your ability to assess the snowpack and choose appropriate routes becomes paramount. Just because we are not putting a danger rating to the snow does not mean there is no avalanche potential. It's not only slab avalanches you need to be thinking about, either. Expect the potential for loose snow avalanches over the next few days, either dry or wet.

FALLING ICE can kill people. The largest ice looms in the Sluice above Lunch Rocks, in the Center Bowl of Tuckerman, and throughout much of Huntington. Other areas pose this threat as well, though to a lesser extent. The best advice we can give is to not spend time underneath areas where ice may fall. Large rocks may provide some cover, but in the past, they have proven themselves to be inadequate shields for people hiding behind them. Lunch Rocks is a hazardous location when icefall is a possibility!

CREVASSES AND WATERFALL HOLES are another potentially lethal hazard. Each season these form in many areas, the worst are in the Sluice, Lip, and Center Bowl. Many of these holes follow stream courses under the snowpack with icy water spraying around.

UNDERMINED SNOW is related to the hazard above. It occurs when streams have eroded away the snowpack from below, but left behind a bridge of snow. This bridge can collapse without warning under your weight, bringing you into the icy stream below. Give wide berth to areas that have already collapsed or show signs of sagging or cracking.

LONG SLIDING FALLS are probably the #1 cause of injury each spring. Cold temperatures cause the soft corn snow to refreeze into a slick and solid mass of ice. We always recommend an ice axe and crampons for travel in steep terrain. You may not need them always, but if the unexpected happens these tools, and the ability to use them effectively, can save you from serious injury or death.

The Lion Head Winter Route is still open. The bottom two-thirds of the John Sherburne Ski Trail is closed. Please cross over to the hiking trail at the closure rope and hike the rest of the way down to Pinkham.

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 or the staff at Hermit Lake Shelters or Pinkham Notch Visitor Center.
- **Posted 7:45 a.m. May 5, 2014. A new advisory will be issued by Thursday, May 2.**

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