

# Mountain Safety Information

Friday, December 8, 2017

This is an informational bulletin and does not expire. A new one will be posted when conditions warrant or be replaced by a General Bulletin or Avalanche Advisory.

Cold temperatures, snow and mixed precipitation have created winter hazards on the mountain. A brief period of rain and above freezing temperatures earlier this week, followed by a refreeze, created firm conditions on our existing snow slopes. In the past 24 hours, a few inches of snowfall combined with west winds will have thinly covered much of this firm snow. Our terrain is still largely dominated by rock and ice, but travelers should be aware of avalanche potential on snow slopes. Be prepared for quickly changing winter conditions if recreating on the mountain.

- The Tuckerman Ravine Trail through Tuckerman Ravine crosses under and through several avalanche paths as it winds its way through the Bowl and across the Headwall. Be prepared to assess the stability of these slopes and to travel across ice directly over cliffs if you choose to travel this route. **The summer Lion Head Trail currently has greatly reduced risk of avalanche and consequence in the event of a fall and is a safer route to the summit.** The Lion Head Winter Route will be the preferred route when enough snow falls on the LH summer route traverse to create avalanche concerns.
- Wind slabs develop quickly in our terrain. Snow squalls or wind following a storm can create wind slabs on any smooth, steep slope on your intended climb or ski descent. Evaluate these slopes before you commit to them and consider the consequences of being swept off your feet. Are there obstacles to hit in your path? (Hint- probably.) Can you protect yourself when climbing from steep ice onto lower angled, snow covered ice?
- Plentiful ice can be found in both Ravines. Conditions can change quickly with rain, sun, and warm temperatures or cold and blowing snow. Be prepared to change objectives by having alternative plans. People above you can create significant hazards. Ice fall and dry-loose avalanches are a threat to consider on any climb.
- If traveling on snow slopes, firm conditions on or near the surface would likely allow a long sliding fall. Just like an avalanche scenario, the currently rocky nature of our terrain significantly elevates consequence of such an accident.

While snow slopes are currently limited, always remember the early season avalanche mantra “If there’s enough snow to ride, there’s enough snow to slide”. A human triggered avalanche one week ago today in Central Gully reminds us of this reality. Ice climbing options are plentiful and we’re optimistic that ski lines will soon follow suit. Be ready, channel the energy of your early season stoke towards refreshing or elevating your avalanche knowledge. Have fun getting together with your backcountry partners to practice beacon searches, geek out on snow, or attend an avalanche class. Snow is in the forecast!

## Please Remember:

- Safe travel in avalanche terrain requires training and experience. This bulletin 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 Harvard Cabin.
- **Posted December 8, 2017. A new bulletin or advisory will be issued when conditions warrant.**

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