

General Bulletin for Saturday, December 9, 2017

Unless updated, this advisory expires at 12:00 midnight Tuesday, December 12, 2017.

General Bulletins are issued when isolated areas of unstable snow exist within our forecast areas. A general bulletin will be in effect until conditions warrant a shift to daily 5 scale avalanche advisories. Please remember that avalanches can occur before 5-scale avalanche forecasts are issued. A new General Bulletin will be issued when conditions warrant or within 72 hours.

Snow is on the way. Over the past week, a brief warmup was followed by a solid refreeze and a light shot of snow with strong wind. A winter storm will develop this afternoon and into tonight. This storm should taper off to upsloping snow showers ending tomorrow afternoon and ultimately leave us with 6"-10" of new snow. Winds will be relatively calm until tomorrow, when our typical NW winds will ramp up through Sunday to peak around 50 mph in the early evening. Expect a break in precipitation on Monday to precede the arrival of another winter storm on Tuesday.

In our terrain, this weather means that our developed avalanche paths, although limited, will become wind loaded and potentially reactive to human triggers through Sunday. Left Gully, Chute, and portions of the upper headwall in Tuckerman as well as Central Gully in Huntington are currently most filled in. Less developed slopes with the potential to produce smaller though still consequential avalanches will be found in much of the terrain, particularly in the upper reaches of ice climbs in both ravines. In addition to avalanche hazards, remember to take into account other early season hazards that exist in the terrain:

- **Rocks, trees and bushes** pepper the terrain. Skiing or sliding into obstacles can ruin your day or worse. New snow may just barely cover a season ending death cookie.
- **Terrain traps and cliffs** make burial and significant injury a real possibility, even if you are only swept off your feet by a small avalanche. The terrain in the Sluice, Lip and Center Bowl areas, beneath the Tuckerman Ravine Trail, is a prime example of this hazard.
- **Long sliding falls** are a threat despite the appearance of new, soft snow on your approach. Wind can easily scour parts of your climb down to an icy bed surface. What you thought would be a mellow snow climb can turn into something much more exciting. Don't count on self-arrest to save you. Protect yourself with a rope and/or don't fall.
- **People** recreating above other people have a history of sending avalanches, rocks and ice into them. Consider yourself lucky if you only receive a minor injury instead of a broken collarbone or full burial. Have alternate plans and don't follow the herd. The relative solitude can be refreshing, and safer.

The summer **Lion Head Trail** is the safer route to the summit than trails through Tuckerman and Huntington. The Lion Head Winter Route will open when snow fills in avalanche paths on the summer trail and fills in the winter route enough to cover rocks, mud and bushes. The **John Sherburne Ski Trail** still lacks sufficient snow for all but the most desperate skiers. By the end of the day tomorrow, it will probably look enticing, but realize that many exposed rocks from a summer construction project will be lurking just below the snow surface.

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.
- **Posted 8:00 a.m., Saturday, December 09, 2017. A new bulletin will be issued when conditions warrant.**

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