

Avalanche Advisory for Saturday, April 21, 2018

Expires tonight at 12:00 midnight

Huntington Ravine has CONSIDERABLE avalanche danger. Yale, Central, Pinnacle, Odell, South, and Escape Hatch have Considerable avalanche danger. Dangerous avalanche conditions exist. Careful snowpack evaluation, cautious route finding, and conservative decision making are essential. North and Damnation have Moderate avalanche danger. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully to identify features of concern.

Tuckerman Ravine has HIGH and CONSIDERABLE avalanche danger. Lip and Center Bowl have High avalanche danger. Very dangerous avalanche conditions exist. Travel in avalanche terrain is not recommended. All other forecast areas have Considerable avalanche danger. Careful snowpack evaluation, cautious route finding, and conservative decision making are essential. The only exception to this is the Little Headwall which has Moderate avalanche danger. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully to identify features of concern.

AVALANCHE PROBLEM: Recent new snow and steady NW wind is elevating the avalanche danger ratings today. Wind slab is likely to be easily triggered and is not bonded well to the soft new snow or the underlying ice crust. With over 16" of recorded snow on the summit since noon on Thursday, avalanches today could be large. Recent avalanche debris in Hillman's and Dodge's has been observed so far through the fog and blowing snow. These recent avalanches plus continued wind loading of slopes are obvious red flags for folks considering playing in or below steep terrain today. Well-developed avalanche paths exist, meaning an avalanche today could also run far onto flat ground. Entering the floor of Tuckerman Ravine today is not recommended as this will require crossing numerous avalanche paths that have the potential to avalanche naturally. With most of avalanche terrain offering a high-risk, high-consequence scenario, lower-angled terrain like the Sherburne will be the safe choice today.

WEATHER: Snow began to fall around noon on Thursday, April 19, and has been steadily accumulating, leaving 16.4" at the summit and 8.25" at Hermit Lake. Thursday evening, wind speeds increased to 40-60mph from the NW and have remained at that speed with occasional gusts into the 70mph range. The low pressure system sitting over the Northeast has begun to drift offshore and will allow clearing to take place later today. Before then, low level moisture will likely keep the summits in the fog with upslope snow showers for the morning. Temperatures today will climb to the upper teens F and winds will remain from the NW at 45-60mph.

SNOWPACK: The bed surface for avalanche activity today will be the ice crust that formed earlier this week. Below this ice crust, snow is still moist due to the insulating layer of snow above. Above this ice crust, widespread soft wind slab exists. This wind slab has several changes in density that are interspersed with graupel. Yesterday, this slab was reactive in stability tests, though struggled to propagate a crack. Continuing snow and wind loading today may allow the slab to overcome the minimal friction offered by the icy bed surface. Numerous red flags are present today; ski the snowpack, not the calendar.

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, April 21, 2018. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

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