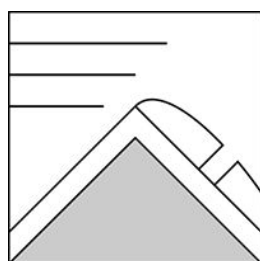


**The Bottom Line**

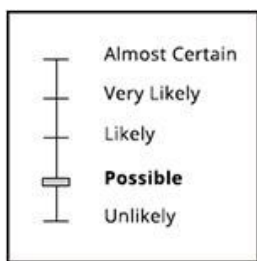
Our avalanche terrain, which harbors existing wind slab, will go through a period of warming today. For this reason and the period of instability it will bring to our snowpack, avalanche danger will be MODERATE for our forecast areas. This scenario of warming wind slabs has many nuances that can be hard to predict. While wind slabs are larger in size and distribution on east facing aspects, the greater amount of solar gain may have more of an impact on shallower wind slabs that reside on south aspects. Heightened avalanche conditions exist on specific terrain features today that can be avoided with good route planning and careful navigation.

**Mountain Weather**

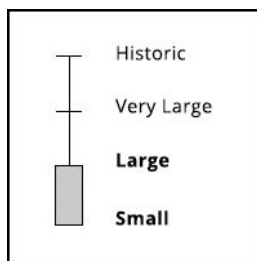
Following a mostly clear Thursday, winter weather brought increasing wind speeds and snowfall to the summits on Friday. The summit received a total of 1.3" of snow with no new snow at Hermit Lake or Grey Knob. Today, upslope snow showers may bring up to another inch of snow to higher elevations with skies clearing by afternoon. Temperatures increased from the high-teens F to 23F on the summit where they currently reside with elevations below 3300' above freezing at 6am. Temperatures will increase today with a forecast high on Mount Washington of 29F. Wind speed will decrease gradually through the day.



Wind Slab



Chance



Size

**Primary Avalanche Problem**

Warming wind slab is the avalanche problem today. This particular scenario has a great amount of uncertainty due to temperatures being close to the freezing mark, clearing that will allow solar gain but a short window of actual daylight due to being close to the Winter Solstice, and varying thickness of existing wind slab. While today's warming will eventually lend stability to the overall snowpack, the first time wind slabs see warmth does decrease stability of the slab for a period of time. South and east facing aspects will be of greater concerns, but for differing reasons. South aspects will see the greatest amount of warming due to length of time in the sun while east facing slopes have the largest size and distribution of wind slab that can be affected.

**Snowpack Observations**

The surface of our snowpack is a mix of melt-freeze crust and wind slab. Wind slabs range from recently formed to those formed a week ago. Our snowpack has been dynamic this season and today will add another change in conditions that will keep avalanche danger elevated. Wind slabs that warm are notoriously hard to predict the behavior of, particularly with the various thickness and distribution we have currently in our terrain.

**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 at the Harvard Cabin.



**Avalanche Forecast for Saturday, December 15, 2018**  
**This expires at midnight.**