

Avalanche Forecast for Thursday, January 3, 2019

This forecast expires at midnight.

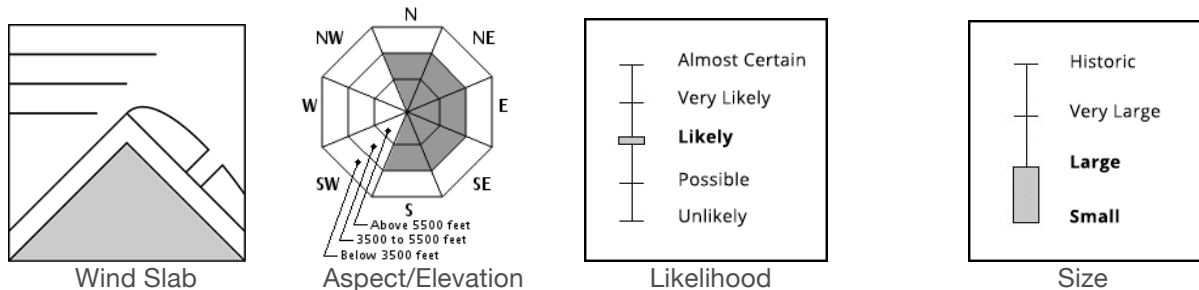
The Bottom Line

New snow and shifting wind will create touchy and widespread wind slab avalanche conditions today. As winds shift, very light density snow on the ground will continue to be picked up and loaded onto the weak layer of new snow that's been falling since midnight. These avalanches are likely to be big enough to bury you in many locations. Approaching steep slopes or gullies from below would be a bad idea due to the touchy nature of the new slabs and the potential for an avalanche to release naturally. Avalanche danger will rise to **CONSIDERABLE** in all higher elevation forecast areas. Cautious route-finding is essential today. Lower elevation areas such as Webster slides and Mt. Willard may rise to **MODERATE** avalanche danger due to less new snow and wind loading.

Mountain Weather

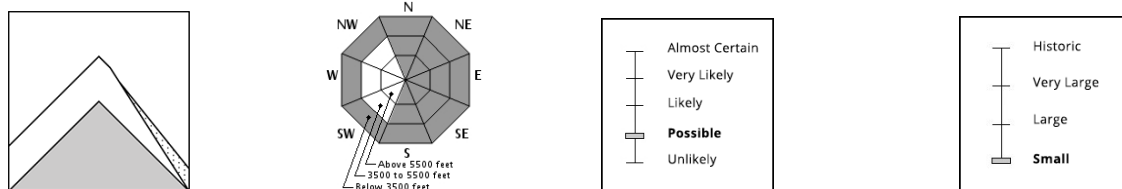
Snow began falling at a moderate intensity around midnight last night and will continue steadily through the morning. As of 6am, 3.5" (9cm) of 6% density snow had fallen at Hermit Lake and Harvard Cabin. It seems that we are on track to meet or exceed the forecasted total snowfall figures which have ranged from two to six inches over the past 36 hours. The low pressure system responsible will be fast moving but the snow associated with it is very light density and will be easily blown into wind slabs by the 40-55 mph winds. The new snow came in on wind from the SSW but will be shifting to the NW through the day. While these wind speeds are fairly low velocity by Mount Washington standards, it should be noted that snow this light in density is already drifting in protected locations around Hermit Lake. Anticipate challenging visibility through the afternoon due to thick summit fog.

Primary Avalanche Problem



Don't be fooled by the relatively small amount of snow expected to fall today. Wind slabs will grow in size through the morning and into the afternoon and will be touchy. The light density snow will be easily loaded and cross-loaded into drifts and pillows but will also create a sensitive failure layer near the old firm wind slabs and icy old surface beneath. Anticipate the potential for a crack to propagate widely or wall to wall across a slope or gully.

Secondary Avalanche Problem



Dry loose avalanches are possible if you can find a wind sheltered spot, such as those at lower elevations, where a wind slab hasn't already formed. Debris from a dry loose avalanche could serve as a trigger to a larger wind slab avalanche.

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.