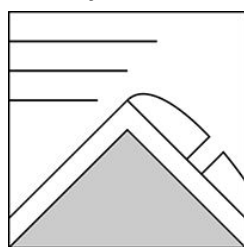


**The Bottom Line**

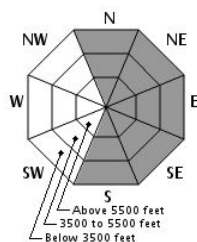
The bullseye data for any new avalanche concerns today will be the amount and rate at which new snow falls today. Though only a small amount of snow is forecast to fall, the new snow will be blown and drifted by westerly winds blowing at a perfect speed for building wind slabs. Wind slabs built on the 10th and 11th have proven unreactive in the past several days and earn a LOW danger rating today. Savvy skiers and climbers will continue to use normal precautions, especially when seeking out larger, smoother slopes for riding. Heavier snow squalls this afternoon are possible so be on the lookout for new wind slabs to form quickly if strong wind speeds combine with the new snow blowing into steep terrain generally facing east. The danger rating could rise to MODERATE quickly with small pockets of touchy wind slab forming and then growing to something more sizable.

**Mountain Weather**

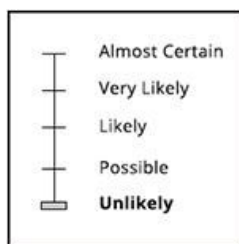
Dry conditions continued through yesterday with moderate wind, fog and seasonably cold temperatures. A cold front will charge through the region this afternoon which presents a wild card in today's forecast. While estimates from the MWObs and the NWS are calling for a trace to 2", there is also the possibility of forcing that brings heavier squalls along with some thunder. This type of system often brings graupel or rimed particles which can make slabs especially touchy. Winds tonight will increase to near 100 mph as temperatures drop rapidly to around -15F. Cold but less windy conditions will follow until another round of light snow arrives Thursday night.

**Primary Avalanche Problem**


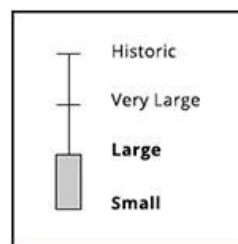
Wind Slab



Aspect/Elevation



Likelihood



Size

Wind slabs formed on the 10th and 11th remain a concern, primarily due to the icy bed surface that they are resting on. New wind slabs may form today due to new snow and increasing winds from the west. The new snow falling today will build small but touchy wind slabs. These will be relatively harmless in most places until snowfall accumulates or exceeds the forecast. Both avalanche concerns will be hard to see in the terrain due to summit fog.

**Snowpack Observations**

Cold and clear conditions since the last avalanche cycle have not promoted the kind of settlement and bonding that make the older wind slab concerns go away. You may even be able to find some early facets forming near the Dec 22 ice crust that was the bed surface for the cycle of large avalanches on January 9-10. This is the kind of avalanche problem that can punish the unwary or the overconfident. Don't be either, carry avalanche rescue gear and spread out when moving through consequential areas.

Frank Carus, Snow Ranger; USDA Forest Service, White Mountain National Forest; (603)466-2713 TTY (603)466-2858

**Please Remember:** Safe travel in avalanche terrain requires training and experience. This forecast is just one of many decision making tools. You control your own risk by choosing where, when, and how you travel. Understand that the avalanche danger may change when actual weather differs from the weather 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.