

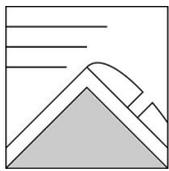
The Bottom Line

Rain falling on snow brings the possibility of wet slab avalanches on steep terrain at lower to middle elevations today. Wind sheltered areas that accumulated snow over the past two days will be most affected and have MODERATE avalanche danger due to the possibility of human-triggering. Be cautious if you find boot top or deeper snow that is getting rained on. New wind drifted snow at higher elevations today will be falling on wind slabs which continued to develop in high winds yesterday. The new load of snow keeps danger ratings elevated into the CONSIDERABLE rating, but just barely. There is a lingering possibility of natural avalanches in isolated areas of mid-elevation terrain where larger wind slabs remain from the previous storm. Most human-triggered wind slab avalanches today would be smaller, though still potentially dangerous.

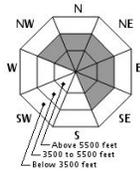
Mountain Weather

The wind diminished slowly through the afternoon yesterday, after a steady strong west wind (60-70 mph gusting to 90) through the early morning hours. Temperatures today are rising from yesterday's low of -4F. Snow will start early this morning and continue through the day and into the evening. A water equivalent of 0.7" of should fall on the area equating to possibly 3-5" of snow at higher elevations. The temperature on the summit is forecast to reach 27F late in the afternoon which may mean that the freeze line will rise into mid-elevation avalanche terrain. Rain seems certain at lower elevations in our forecast area. South winds will move snow today. Cold temps return tonight with upsloping snow showers bringing another 1-3" of snow to the higher summits.

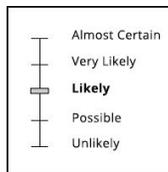
Primary Avalanche Problem



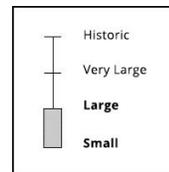
Wet Slab



Aspect/Elevation



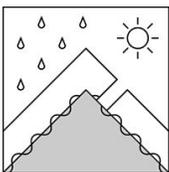
Likelihood



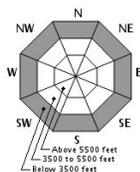
Size

The 3-5" of new snow today will build the largest wind slabs on northerly aspects and crossload others. These wind slabs will be largest beneath steep terrain features and near the tops of gullies, particularly those with a good amount of fetch like South and Odell Gully in Huntington and the Great Gulf Headwall. Today's wind slabs may form on slabs formed since Wednesday, which will be less reactive to a human trigger but could keep larger avalanches a possibility today.

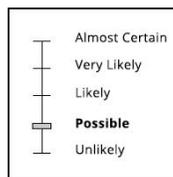
Secondary Avalanche Problem



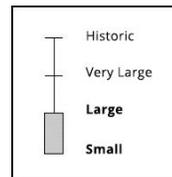
Wet Slab



Aspect/Elevation



Likelihood



Size

Snow will turn to rain which will add load and weaken snow on the ground and may lead to human triggered avalanches. Steep areas of accumulated snow, such as you might find beneath pitches of ice or rock slab in Webster gullies, could be especially problematic if rain water flows beneath as well as on the existing soft slabs.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Field time during a brief period of marginally improved visibility allowed a trip into Tuckerman Ravine where the floor was completely wind scoured to old refrozen surface with patches of old surface peppering steep terrain too. Smaller sized piles of avalanche debris indicated small to medium sized avalanches had released in the Lip and Left Gully. Hillman's Highway had the largest and most obvious debris pile and a 16-18"....(see mountwashingtonavalanchecenter.org)

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.