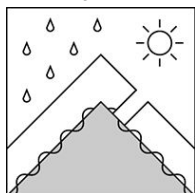


The Bottom Line

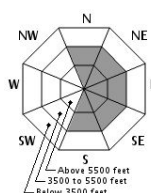
Warm temperatures and sunshine will again bring the potential for wet slab avalanches today. If you find yourself sinking into the snow to your boot-tops or more, you have found the avalanche problem. Yesterday's warm up did not reach beyond 20-30 cm so plenty of dry snow beneath is waiting to get wet and contribute to the possibility of a human-triggered avalanche today. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully for signs of this heating and find another aspect or lower angle slope to ski on. MODERATE avalanche danger exists at all elevations today due to the potential of stubborn but large slabs in isolated areas. Wet slabs and wet loose avalanches will be more reactive in steep terrain where heating is most intense. Be alert for cloud cover and cooling temperatures that could refreeze the snowpack this afternoon and create the potential for a long sliding fall.

Mountain Weather

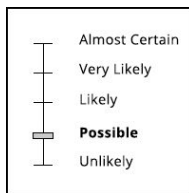
The temperature on the summit reached 34F for the second day in a row yesterday with mixed sun and clouds and temperatures at 3800' reaching 42F. Temperatures cooled to 12F on the summit late last night before climbing to 25F again at 3am, with warmer temps at ravine elevations. Another warm day is on tap after last night's brief cool down. Expect temperatures near 30F on the summit with temps likely to be well into the 40's in the ravines. Relatively light wind on the summit, 20-35 mph, will allow maximum heating mid-day prior to clouds rolling in later in the afternoon. Freezing conditions may return before dark.

Primary Avalanche Problem


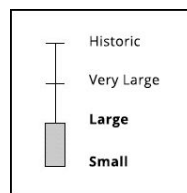
Wet Slab



Aspect/Elevation

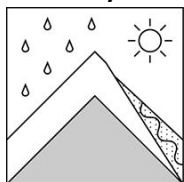


Likelihood

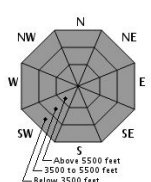


Size

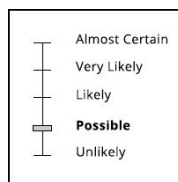
Wet slab avalanches are likely to be stubborn today. Softer snow or thinner slabs will make it easier for a crack to propagate. An icy bed surface beneath the most recent snowfall and wind loaded slopes make today's avalanche problem worse, particularly in areas of previously wind drifted snow. Wet slabs could be large enough to bury a person.

Secondary Avalanche Problem


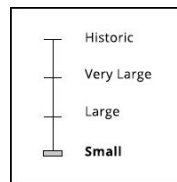
Wet Loose



Aspect/Elevation



Likelihood



Size

Wet loose avalanches, also known as sluffs, could be heavy enough to cause some problems today. Not only could they carry you somewhere you'd rather not go, like off a cliff, but their weight moving down slope can serve as a trigger for a larger slab.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Warm air temperatures, a bit of rain and some sunshine started the upper snowpack on the road to becoming isothermal yesterday. The process only made part of the way down into the snowpack where wet snow was above dry snow to variable depths at observed locations. You may have noticed fractures and slides from metal roofs, snow falling off of evergreen tree branches. If you were in avalanche terrain, you would have seen wet snow that could easily form a snowball in one hand, but only in the top few inches unless you dug in a an area where a drainage channel was established. As long as dry snow remains sandwiched between the warming, wetting and weakening upper snowpack and the thick and durable ice crust formed on January 25th, avalanche danger will remain elevated.

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.