

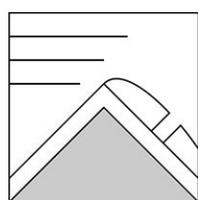
The Bottom Line

A rapidly warming wind slab over an icy bed surface is today's obvious red flag. As the wind slabs in avalanche terrain warm and weaken today, the possibility of an avalanche will increase. Human triggered avalanches remain possible today due to the change our upper snowpack will experience today. Wet loose sluffs are one sign that the snowpack is transitioning to a wet slab problem along with wet and mushy snow. These sluffs also have the potential to magnify a skier's weight and become the tipping point that could initiate a slab avalanche.

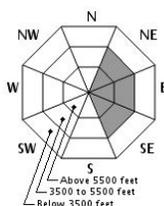
MODERATE avalanche danger exists today with a warm and wetting snowpack.

Mountain Weather

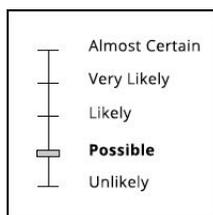
Sunshine, light wind, and warming temperatures made for a beautiful day in the mountains yesterday. Current temps around the range this morning are 23F at the summit, 26F at Gray Knob, and 25F at Hermit Lake. As the warm front spreads over the region today, cloud cover and wind will increase, but the real story will be temperatures getting above freezing on the summit by noon and increasing toward 40F by dark. Rain is expected to arrive this evening, with about 1/8" falling overnight. Tomorrow will be cloudy with summit fog and a chance of rain early in the day.

Primary Avalanche Problem


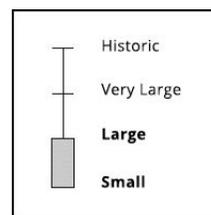
Wind Slab



Aspect/Elevation



Likelihood



Size

Wind slabs that had a poor initial bond to an icy bed surface can generally be found on slopes that have a degree of easterly aspect. Recent avalanche activity yesterday points to these existing primarily in upper start zones and being particularly susceptible to triggering on unsupported rollovers. In many places, these wind slabs can be managed by terrain choice and avoided altogether by traveling on the older grey snow surface.

Secondary Avalanche Problem

Today's warming is a red flag for the development of **wet slabs** this afternoon. As warming will be driven by increasing temperatures today, we expect this problem to develop on all aspects of our forecast area, though particularly on aspects that have larger wind slabs transitioning to wet slabs. Watch for snow becoming wet and mushy today as well as the warning signs like roller balls and wet loose activity that usually accompany wet slabs.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Wind slabs that formed Tuesday and Wednesday sit on top of an icy bed surface. These moderately firm slabs (1F to P hard) sit over a weaker layer that yesterday proved capable of producing an avalanche several times. While settlement and time since has helped these slabs gain some strength, warming today will increase instability as the day progresses. The change from a wind slab problem to wet slab problem may be hard to discern today, but the travel advice remains the same for both: heightened avalanche conditions exist on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully to identify features of concern.

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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.