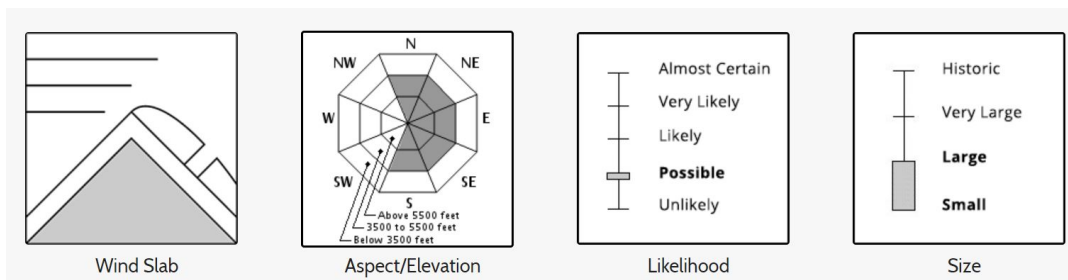


## The Bottom Line

Wind driven snow that accumulated through the week remains a concern in steep terrain. Evaluate snow carefully and understand that these slabs may be firm underfoot but could crack and fail under your weight and possibly above you on the slope. Thin spots in the slab such as over a boulder or the ice bulge in the Main Gully in Gulf of Slides can be the weak spot where a crack develops. Move one at a time and avoid pillows of hollow snow when you can. Human triggered avalanches remain possible today giving us a MODERATE avalanche danger rating.

## Primary Avalanche Problem



Wind slabs exist in many areas after the wind loading that occurred through the week. These slabs have not settled and bonded yet. Most of these will appear hard and stubborn underfoot but they contain weak layers of softer snow and rest on an icy and flat (though coarse from riming) bed surface that has proven itself to be a contributor to what is a lingering avalanche problem. Look for and avoid wind driven snow piled up at the base of steep areas such as low in Chute and Right Gully as well as in sheltered locations like Odell Gully and mid-slope in the south snowfields of Gulf of Slides.

## Mountain Weather

An approaching weather system will bring warming temperatures and frozen forms of precipitation turning to freezing rain and rain by day's end. The temperature at 3-4,000 is already above freezing with much colder air pooling in the valleys below. Precipitation falling today should not affect snow stability but will certainly make skiing or hiking unpleasant. Wind will be from the west at 60-80 mph with summit temperature reaching 30 by the end of the day.

## Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Field reports are limited but good visibility allowed some observations yesterday in a few areas. The most recent avalanche cycle is a good reminder that small amounts of snow can build large slabs and can produce natural avalanches. The large avalanche in Tuckerman Ravine is dramatic and it's location high across the Headwall and into the upper Lip is not typical and likely a result of the low wind speeds that allowed snow falling earlier in the week to accumulate higher in the terrain than it usually does. Two other field reports indicate avalanches occurred low in the exit from Diagonal, above the Harvard ice bulge and also a report from outside our forecast area on North Baldface.

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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.