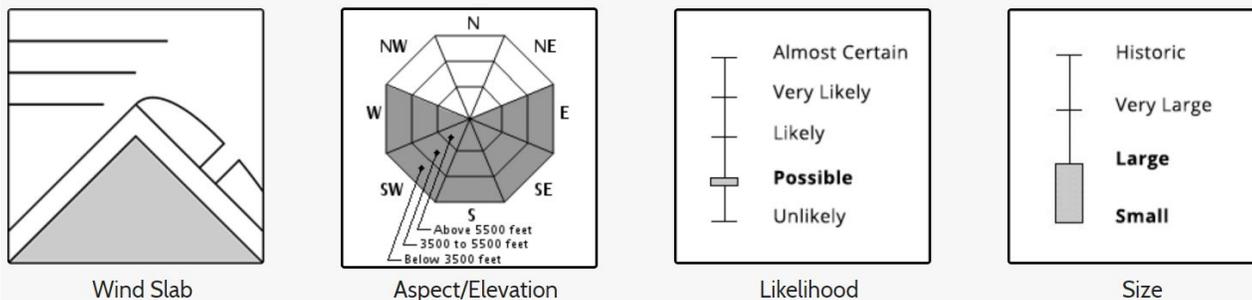


The Bottom Line

- Wind slabs accumulated beneath steep terrain features and in sheltered locations will warm and weaken today creating MODERATE avalanche danger.
- It will be easier to trigger these stubborn slabs in steep areas (35-40 degrees or more), particularly where the slabs are thin and unsupported by terrain features.
- This is a low probability but high consequence avalanche problem. There will not be clues that this hard snow is unstable and trigger points may merely be thin spots in the slab.
- Use normal precautions and consider skiing in shady locations as temperatures warm or snow moistens.
- Lower elevations will warm further but generally have fewer wind slabs to be concerned about. Keep an eye out for snow and ice loosening their grip overhead on cliffs or rock slabs.

Mountain Weather

Strong high pressure will dominate the weather today with mild temperatures and light wind. Light wind and clear skies overnight led to pooling of cold air in the valleys while mid-elevation temperatures are near 30F at 6am and 16F on the summit. Mostly sunny skies and low wind speeds will allow further warming today with a forecast summit high of 31F.

Avalanche Problem


Wind slabs sit on a hard, icy crust that formed January 12. These slabs have shown moderate results in stability tests and have weak interfaces at two depths. Rapid warming is a classic red flag and though this effect will be limited by the low zenith of the January sun, it is the reason that the danger rating remains Moderate.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

There was consensus yesterday that the avalanche danger was teetering between Low and Moderate. Several factors kept the Moderate rating in play. An icy crust that serves as a planar bed surface, the same ice crust which could be encouraging limited facet development, and the tendency of so many users misreading the meaning of Low avalanche danger as “No avalanche danger”. Had temperatures remained cold today, consensus would have led to a solid low rating due to the unlikelihood of a human triggered avalanche, despite... (see www.mountwashingtonavalanchecenter.org for the rest of the forecast)

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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.