

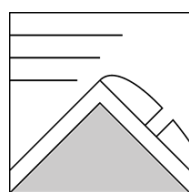
## The Bottom Line

The avalanche danger will be **CONSIDERABLE** today in terrain currently loading with wind driven snow. Natural avalanches are possible and human-triggered avalanches likely in steep, wind loaded terrain.

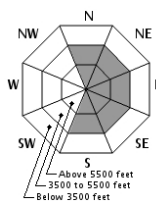
- Strong winds are building slabs which could be triggered by skier or climber.
- Wind slabs may be on the small side but could be large enough to carry a person and bury them in a terrain trap.
- These slabs are reloading an already icy bed surface across some areas such as Chute to Sluice in Tuckerman Ravine.
- The potential exists for an avalanche to trigger naturally due to continued wind loading or by a person from well below the starting zone.

The Winter Lion Head Route is the safer route to the summit from the east side. An ice axe and crampons are needed near treeline and above. The Sherburne ski trail has improved quite a bit with the new snow though some open water bars remain with barely submerged rocks lurking here and there.

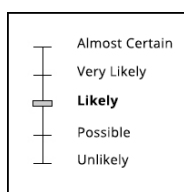
## Primary Avalanche Problem



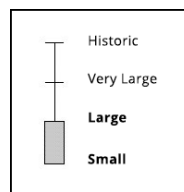
Wind Slab



Location



Likelihood



Size

New wind slabs began to form early this morning and may be at peak instability and a dangerous size mid-day. Carefully evaluate the terrain and snow pack and give a wide berth to avalanche paths. Best to keep the angle low and avoid any overhead hazard if skiing. Continuous sluffing from steep pitches of ice and cliff bands will grow these wind slabs as well.

## Mountain Weather

The summit recorded about 3" of snow Saturday which fell on light winds through the day. Wind velocity increased rapidly around 4am this morning and will continue to blow from the northwest through the day in the 55-75 mph range with higher gusts. This is an ideal wind speed and direction for loading our prime avalanche terrain. Temperatures will remain in the teens on the summits today with the potential for another 2" of snow to fall.

## Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

It has been three days since any reported avalanche activity that followed the snow and wind loading event around the New Year. There have been many observations of clean shears in the moderate range at various depths in that snow though. New snow falling yesterday and today could lead to more avalanches despite the small amount of new snow fall. History has shown that a northwest wind can quickly turn small amounts of snow falling onto the plateau-like feature above the east facing ravines and gulfs into thick and dangerous slabs. The new snow which fell yesterday may have bonded to the various textures of existing snow surfaces but that is not relevant when considering a wind slab growing on top. That new snow is more likely to be the soft, weak layer that is unable to support the wind slab growing above.

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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.