

The Bottom Line

Small avalanches will become possible in isolated areas and extremely steep terrain later today. Keep a close eye on the rate and intensity of new snow and consider the consequences of being knocked off your feet by a small avalanche. While there will be **LOW** avalanche danger today, many other mountain hazards will persist due to the recent warm weather. Count icefall, rockfall, undermined and poorly bonded ice and a rotten snowpack, among them, especially at mid- and lower-elevations.

Mountain Weather

Yesterday, temperatures on the summit of Mount Washington hovered around 25 while mid elevation ravines temperatures remained higher. Limited field observations make the refreeze line uncertain though it seems likely to have refrozen at ravine levels overnight. How deep the refreeze remains uncertain as well. Today, expect summit fog, continued mild temperatures and low wind speeds from the east then south. Snow shower activity today will be hit or miss with a trace to 3" forecast to fall in passing snow showers before heavier precipitation begins this evening. Light rain showers are on tap for lower elevations. Tomorrow brings an end to our dry spell with a significant low pressure system gaining strength over the Atlantic which will drop a foot or more of heavy snow in higher terrain beginning tonight. Wind will be from the south overnight and then east until late afternoon. Wind will shift west late in the day tomorrow.

Avalanche Problems

Rain on snow and continued warm temperatures are the driver for **wet loose** avalanches. Generally the snowpack has been warm and wet since Sunday with good settlement. Most of the firm snow prime avalanche paths will likely be stable. That being said, rain on snow and ice is never a good thing for winter recreation. Loose snow on slabs of ice or rock, especially at lower and mid-elevations should be on your radar. New snow showers could bring up to 3" new snow today and build **wind slabs**. Wind will be from the east and south and will be light. Wind slabs should be limited to areas beneath steep terrain where sluffing snow accumulates in east through northwest terrain. If snow depth climbs above your boot-tops and you see shooting cracks, you found the avalanche problem.

Forecast Discussion

Snow and ice conditions will be widely variable by elevation and aspect due to the departure from seasonal average temperatures. Today is likely to be another day where large and deadly icefall could occur, especially in Crawford Notch. More than the usual vigilance regarding your position in the fall line will go a long way today to help keep you out of harm's way.

Last Sunday, snow rangers assisted a party whose dog took a terrible fall down the Chute. We generally have a policy which discourages diverting rescue resources away from potential human casualties but it proved impossible to watch the dog tomahawking and bouncing down the 50 degree slope and not do something to help. Please remember that dogs love to please their people more than anything in the world and are incapable of assessing risk. That risk assessment is up to you. It is telling that the USFS MWAC's avalanche rescue dog NEVER goes with us into steep terrain without a harness and rope.

Consider the value of a 30 minute walk before or after your trip to the mountains where sharp ski edges and tumbling falls can't send your dog to the vet, or worse.

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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.