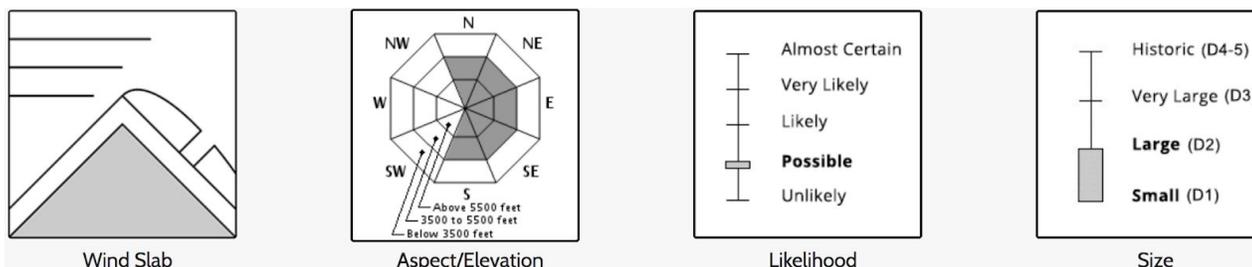


The Bottom Line

New, wind transported snow brings the possibility of human triggered avalanches today. A smooth and icy snow surface exists beneath the fresh wind slabs which continue to grow this morning. Carefully assess steep terrain for these wind slabs as well as a sliding fall hazard, depending on aspect. Avalanches in a few areas of Tuckerman Ravine, Gulf of Slides and other areas with a large fetch could be large enough to bury a person. Even a small avalanche today could be a big problem due to the icy, hard surface beneath the new snow. Avalanche danger today is MODERATE. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully.

Avalanche Problem


Snow that is softer than ice in steep terrain is also the avalanche problem so consider the consequences of triggering a slide. Wind slabs will appear smooth and white in contrast to the gray, icy surfaces nearby. It's easy to underestimate the potential size of an avalanche when only two inches of snow has fallen, but our terrain is configured in such a way that allows large amounts of snow to move with a westerly wind. Wind slabs are likely to be stubborn, but don't rule out reactive slabs that can carry a crack and fail in steep terrain. Look for lower consequence and lower angles slopes to test before committing. Fresh wind slabs take some time to heal and bond.

Mountain Weather

Yesterday morning, snow showers began with moderate southwest winds in the 30-40 mph range. Around mid-day, wind shifted to the west and west-northwest while increasing in speed, reaching the 70-80 mph range. Around 2" of new snow fell through the past 24 hours. Temperatures remained well below freezing at mid and upper elevations. Today, skies will clear this morning with wind from the west slowly dropping off this afternoon when clouds build again and temperatures rise. Expect wind from the west to diminish to the lower side of the 45-60 mph range by this afternoon. Temperatures will rise to the high teens on the summit, 20's F at Ravine elevations. Tomorrow, a warm front arrives, bringing some more snow initially before transitioning to rain showers by evening. Expect poor visibility due to summit fog with warm temperatures in the high 20's. Wind will be light from the south in the 20 mph range during daylight hours.

Forecast Discussion

Snow that is softer than ice in steep terrain is also the avalanche problem so consider the consequences of triggering a slide. Wind slabs will appear smooth and white in contrast to the gray, icy surfaces nearby. It's easy to underestimate the potential size of an avalanche when only two inches of snow has fallen, but our terrain is configured in such a way that allows large amounts of snow to move with a westerly wind. Wind slabs are likely to be stubborn, but don't rule out reactive slabs that can carry a crack and fail in steep terrain. Look for lower consequence and lower angles slopes to test before committing. Fresh wind slabs take some time to heal and bond.

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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.