

Mt Hood

Issued: 6:28 PM PST Friday, January 12, 2018 by Dallas Glass

NWAC avalanche forecasts apply to backcountry avalanche terrain in the Olympics, Washington Cascades and Mt Hood area. These forecasts do not apply to developed ski areas, avalanche terrain affecting highways and higher terrain on the volcanic peaks above the Cascade crest level.

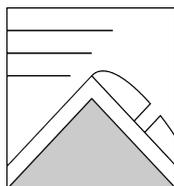
The Bottom Line: Icy conditions near and below treeline will limit avalanche danger and make travel difficult Saturday. Above treeline a high level of uncertainty exist due to several days of significant precipitation, wind, and limited visibility. Venture cautiously into above treeline terrain until more information can be gathered.

Elevation	Saturday		Outlook for Sunday
 Above Treeline	 Moderate	Heightened avalanche conditions on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully; identify problem features.	 Moderate
 Near Treeline	 Low	Generally safe, watch for unstable snow on isolated terrain features.	 Low
 Below Treeline	 Low	Generally safe, watch for unstable snow on isolated terrain features.	 Low

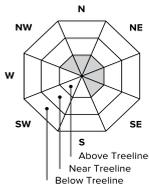
Avalanche Problems for Saturday

Wind Slab

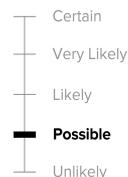
Wind slabs can take up to a week to stabilize. They are confined to lee and cross-loaded terrain features and can be avoided by sticking to sheltered or wind scoured areas.



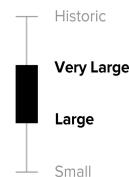
Avalanche Problem



Aspect/Elevation



Likelihood



Size

Avalanche Forecast for Saturday

Precipitation should taper off quickly Saturday morning with clearing skies and improving visibility expected by late morning. Warm air temperatures and increasing sun will have a difficult time effecting the rain/freezing rain crust formed Friday.

Icy surface conditions below and near tree line will great reduce the avalanche hazard at these elevations. Uncertainty exists around the upper elevations regarding the recent rain/freezing rain event.

Recent weather has limited our observations above treeline. Firm wind slabs likely exist on lee and cross-loaded slopes. Give these areas respect as they may be difficult to trigger but could produce very large avalanches.

Expect difficult travel conditions this weekend with icy conditions at lower elevations and varied snow surfaces at higher elevations.

Avalanche Summary

A strong weather system initially brought snow to Mt. Hood on Thursday followed by rain and freezing rain through Friday morning. This has created a strong surface ice crust up to at least 7300 feet. Above treeline, strong winds and very limited visibility has made travel extremely difficult and observations nearly impossible. W-SW winds Wednesday through Friday combined with significant snowfall at higher elevations has likely created a variety of snow surfaces including firm wind slabs in the alpine.

Observations

On Friday, observations were limited due to low visibility, but a thick ice crust was observed from 5900 ft to 7300 ft in the Mt. Hood Meadows area. The ice crust was preventing wind transport of recent snow.

Mountain Weather Synopsis for Saturday & Sunday

An upper level ridge positioned over the west coast is building Saturday afternoon. Residual light precipitation persisted over the Olympics and central WA Cascade west slopes Saturday morning but has ended in all areas by Saturday afternoon under strengthening high pressure. Temperatures have climbed rapidly Saturday as high pressure aloft builds, with low to mid 40's common both east and west of the crest, on the volcanoes and over the Olympics. Clear skies over the Mt Hood area will continue with a further clearing trend across the WA Cascades and Olympics Saturday night into Sunday as the high pressure ridge begins moving inland. The strong upper level ridge will shift into eastern Washington on Sunday and the Pacific Northwest should enjoy a sunny and mild day. However, offshore flow will begin to increase late Sunday night, with cooler easterly flow muting temperatures a bit in the Cascade Passes and for the lower/mid mountain of Mt. Hood on Sunday. A weak Pacific frontal system will begin to spread mid and high clouds into the region Sunday night.

24 Hour Quantitative Precipitation ending at 4 am			Snow Level/Freezing Level in feet					
Location	Sun	Mon	Day	Northwest Cascades	Northeast Cascades	Central Cascades	South Cascades	Easterly Flow in Passes
Hurricane Ridge	lt .10	0	Saturday Afternoon	9500'	8500'	7500'	10000'	10500'
Mt Baker Ski Area	0	0	Saturday Night	11000'	10000'	9000'	10500'	11500'
Washington Pass	.10	0	Sunday	11000'	10000'	9500'	11000'	11500'
Stevens Pass	lt .10	0	Sunday Night	10000'	10000'	9000'	10000'	11000'
Snoqualmie Pass	lt .25	0	Cascade Snow / Freezing Levels noted above refer to the north (approximately Mt Baker and Washington Pass), central (approximately Stevens to White Pass) and south (near Mt Hood). Freezing Level is when no precipitation is forecast.					
Mission Ridge	0	0	* Note that surface snow levels are common near the passes during easterly pass flow and may result in multiple snow / freezing levels.					
Crystal Mt	lt .10	0						
Paradise	.25	0						
White Pass	lt .10	0						
Mt Hood Meadows	0	0						
Timberline	0	0						

LT = less than; WE or Water equivalent is the liquid water equivalent of melted snow in hundredths of inches. As a rough approximation 1 inch of snow = about .10 inches WE, or 10 inches of snow = about 1 inch WE.

USE AT YOUR OWN RISK

This Backcountry Avalanche Forecast is provided in conjunction with the US Forest Service, and is intended for personal and recreational purposes only. Safe backcountry travel requires preparation and planning, and this information may be used for planning purposes but does not provide all the information necessary for backcountry travel. Advanced avalanche education is strongly encouraged.

The user acknowledges that it is impossible to accurately predict natural events such as avalanches in every instance, and the accuracy or reliability of the data provided here is not guaranteed in any way. This forecast describes general avalanche conditions and local variations will always occur. This forecast expires 24 hours after the posted time unless noted otherwise.