



Northwest
Avalanche
Center



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Olympics

Issued: 8:11 PM PST Saturday, February 3, 2018 by Josh Hirshberg

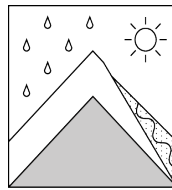
The Bottom Line: Warm weather will create wet surface snow conditions at all elevations. Stay off of steep slopes with wet surface snow where you might trigger a Loose Wet avalanche. Avoid traveling on or below Cornices. Warm temperatures and recent rain will make it more likely for these large blocks of snow to fail.

| Elevation | Sunday | | Outlook for Monday |
|----------------|----------|---|--------------------|
| Above Treeline | Moderate | Heightened avalanche conditions on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully; identify problem features. | Moderate |
| Near Treeline | Moderate | Heightened avalanche conditions on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully; identify problem features. | Moderate |
| Below Treeline | Moderate | Heightened avalanche conditions on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully; identify problem features. | Moderate |

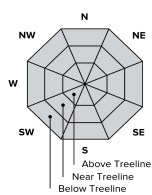
Avalanche Problems for Sunday

Loose Wet

Loose wet avalanches occur where water is running through the snowpack, and release at or below the trigger point. Avoid terrain traps such as cliffs, gullies, or tree wells. Exit avalanche terrain when you see pinwheels, roller balls, a slushy surface, or during rain-on-snow events.



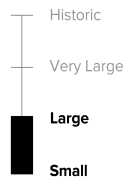
Avalanche Problem



Aspect/Elevation



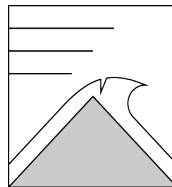
Likelihood



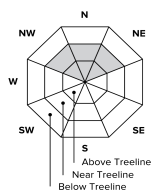
Size

Cornices

Cornices are easy to identify and are confined to lee and cross-loaded ridges, sub-ridges, and sharp convexities. They are easiest to trigger during periods of rapid growth (new snow and wind), rapid warming, and during rain-on-snow events. Cornices often catch people by surprise when they break farther back onto flatter areas than expected.



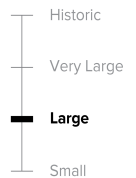
Avalanche Problem



Aspect/Elevation



Likelihood



Size

Avalanche Forecast for Sunday

Light rain and continued mild temperatures on Sunday will maintain wet snow and avalanche conditions at all elevations in the Olympics.

Loose wet avalanches are possible to trigger on steep slopes with wet surface snow. Avoid slopes where avalanches may carry you into dangerous terrain such as over a cliff, into a creek, or down a gully. Watch for new rollerballs and pinwheels as signs that triggering a loose wet avalanche is becoming more likely.

Large cornices exist primarily on NW-NE aspects along ridgelines in the Hurricane Ridge area. Mild air temperatures and rain will make these massive blocks of snow more likely to fail. It is very difficult to predict when and where cornices will fall. Avoid traveling on or below cornices during this mild weekend.

Several glide cracks have been reported recently by NPS rangers. Glide avalanches occur in locations where wet smooth ground surfaces allow the entire snowpack to avalanche. Glide avalanches are highly unpredictable and as their releases generally are not tied to peak warming or rainfall. If you see glide cracks on a slope, avoid traveling on or below that terrain. While you are unlikely to trigger a glide avalanche, a glide avalanche would be large and deadly.

Avalanche Summary

Saturday morning's sunbreaks and mild temperatures were followed by periods of light rain in the afternoon. Significant snowpack settlement continues to occur in the Hurricane Ridge area with the recent warm and wet weather. On Friday, several natural loose wet avalanches were observed at all elevations.

Large cornices developed during the last two weeks of January along ridgelines near and above treeline.

The recent warm and wet weather has produced glide cracks on slopes with smooth ground surfaces. Observations indicate glide cracks in common locations such as 20th of June, Steeple, and the Steep-and-Icy avalanche paths.

Observations

NWAC pro-observer Matt Schonwald and NPS Rangers traveled in the Mt Angeles areas Friday. They observed moist to wet surface snow up to 6000 feet. Loose wet avalanches were seen releasing during sunny breaks around mid-day. They identified and avoided traveling near or below large cornices.

Mountain Weather Synopsis for Sunday & Monday

Moisture continues to stream into the region in NW flow aloft, riding up and over a stationary upper level ridge parked offshore. Moderate to occasionally heavy rain seen along the west slopes of the Cascades today has come to an end as a weak frontal boundary passed through the area earlier this afternoon, changing steady rain to showers with intensities lowering and beginning to usher in somewhat cooler air. The north Cascades on both sides of the crest were again the relatively local cool spot in this rainy pattern, with snow levels peaking around 6000 feet today. Moderate to strong westerly winds will continue in most locations and elevations in this pattern. Snow levels will gradually fall overnight and settle between 3500-4500 feet on Monday. Showers should continue in W-NW flow, again mainly for the west slopes of the Cascades, with new snowfall accumulations expected above 4000 feet for Snoqualmie Pass to Mt. Baker. A weak upper level feature may enhance shower activity in the north Cascades on Monday. NW flow will keep plenty of moisture and clouds banked up along the west slopes of the Cascades Monday and Monday night. The ridge will amplify offshore on Monday and begin to slide back towards the PNW Monday night, helping to decrease shower activity.

| 24 Hour Quantitative Precipitation ending at 4 am | | | Snow Level/Freezing Level in feet | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-----------|--|----------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Location | Mon | Tue | Day | Olympics | Northwest Cascades | Northeast Cascades | Central Cascades | South Cascades | Easterly Flow in Passes |
| Hurricane Ridge | .25 | lt .10 | | | | | | | |
| Mt Baker Ski Area | 2.00 | .50 | Sunday Evening | 6000' | 5000' | 5500' | 5500' | 7000' | |
| Washington Pass | .75 | lt .25 | Sunday Night | 4500' | 4000' | 4500' | 4500' | 5500' | |
| Stevens Pass | 2.00 | .50 - .75 | Monday | 4000' | 4000' | 4000' | 3500' | 4500' | |
| Snoqualmie Pass | 2.00 | .50 - .75 | Monday Night | 3500' | 3000' | 3000' | 3000' | 4000' | |
| Mission Ridge | lt .10 | lt .10 | 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. | | | | | | |
| Crystal Mt | .25 | lt .10 | * Note that surface snow levels are common near the passes during easterly pass flow and may result in multiple snow / freezing levels. | | | | | | |
| Paradise | 1.50 - 2.00 | lt .25 | | | | | | | |
| White Pass | .50 - .75 | lt .10 | | | | | | | |
| Mt Hood Meadows | .50 - .75 | lt .10 | | | | | | | |
| Timberline | .50 - .75 | lt .10 | | | | | | | |

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.