

Mt Hood

Issued: 6:25 PM PST Tuesday, February 13, 2018 by Dennis D'Amico

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.

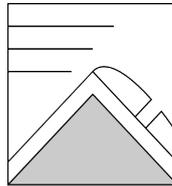
The Bottom Line: Avalanche conditions will begin to change Wednesday as moderate westerly winds transport new snowfall and quickly build fresh wind slabs on lee slopes near and above treeline. Avoid steep slopes with wind deposited snow such as below cornices, on wind drifts, and near uneven snow surfaces. Shallow storm slabs may develop in less wind affected areas throughout the terrain Wednesday.

Elevation	Wednesday, February 14, 2018		Outlook for Thursday
 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

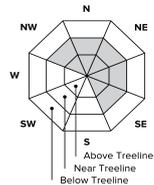
Avalanche Problems for Wednesday

Wind Slab

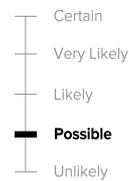
Wind slabs can take up to a week to stabilize. They are confined to lee and cross-loaded terrain features and can be avoided by sticking to sheltered or wind scoured areas.



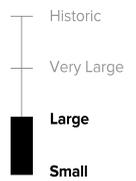
Avalanche Problem



Aspect/Elevation



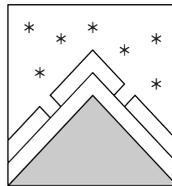
Likelihood



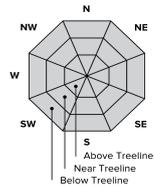
Size

Storm Slab

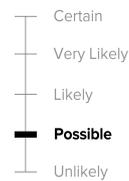
Storm slabs usually stabilize within a few days, and release at or below the trigger point. They exist throughout the terrain, and can be avoided by waiting for the storm snow to stabilize.



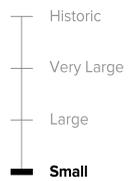
Avalanche Problem



Aspect/Elevation



Likelihood



Size

Avalanche Forecast for Wednesday

A quick moving frontal system should bring fresh snowfall to Mt. Hood late Tuesday night and Wednesday morning along with much cooler temperatures. 6-12 inches of new snow may bond poorly to a medley of wind sculpted snow surfaces or surface crusts.

Avalanche conditions will begin to change Wednesday as moderate westerly winds transport new snowfall and quickly build fresh wind slabs on lee slopes near and above treeline. Avoid steep slopes with wind deposited snow such as below cornices, on wind drifts, and near uneven snow surfaces. Shallow storm slabs may develop in less wind affected areas throughout the terrain Wednesday. Watch for developing storm slab instabilities during extended periods of intense snowfall.

Loose dry avalanches will not be listed as a problem but will be possible on very steep slopes. Be aware of the consequences of a loose dry avalanche near terrain traps such as cliffs, gullies, or open creeks. In areas where shallow loose new snow bonds poorly to the underlying crust, avoid steep icy slopes where it will be difficult to stop a fall.

Avalanche Summary

Temperatures pushed into the upper 30s and 40s under mostly sunny skies Tuesday. Westerly winds near and above treeline picked up late in the day. Softened snow surfaces will quickly refreeze due to winds and cooling temperatures Tuesday night.

Warm and wet weather the first week of February created a strong and consolidated snowpack. The current snowpack consist of numerous old crusts and very strong refrozen layers. There are no significant layers of concern at this time.

No avalanches have been observed over the last several days.

Observations

Mt Hood Meadows ski patrol Sunday reported very firm surface snow conditions resulting in no current avalanche problems.

Mountain Weather Synopsis for Wednesday & Thursday

On Wednesday, a shortwave trough embedded in Northwest flow aloft is sliding over the Pacific Northwest and has replaced a tongue of Tuesday's offshore high pressure ridge which had kept us under warm and generally fair weather. The trough axis has moved just east of the Cascades by Wednesday afternoon. The relatively stationary Pacific High pressure dominates all but the peripheries of the North Pacific Ocean and the next frontal wave to affect the region is currently riding over the top of the ridge and is located just south of Alaska. A surface cold front which passed to our east on Tuesday night brought a significant decrease in temperatures (now most stations are in the 20's and 10's) with decreasing post-frontal westerly flow and generally decreasing light to moderate snow showers. A band of heavier convergence is currently moving south of Stevens pass toward Snoqualmie pass. Snow showers will be heaviest along the west slopes of the Cascades from the central Cascades to Mt. Hood. Any snow shower activity should be light by the afternoon and most areas will see snow showers ending by evening. Upper-level northwest flow will continue with a break between the systems generally Wednesday night through Thursday, with some very light snow shower activity continuing in the Mt. Hood area during this period. Thursday night, another upper shortwave approaches from the northwest, spreading increasing light to occasional moderate snow into the region along with increasing moderate westerly winds at crest-level. The brunt of this system won't arrive until daylight hours on Friday.

Precipitation Forecast			Snow/Freezing Level (ft)								
Location	Thu	Fri	Day	Hurricane Ridge	Mt. Washington Baker	Stevens Pass	Snoqualmie Pass	Crystal Mt.	Mt. Hood	Easterly Flow in the Cascade Passes	
Hurricane Ridge	lt .25	lt .25	Wednesday Afternoon	2500'	2000'	2000'	None'	None'	2000'	None'	2500'
Mt Baker Ski Area	lt .25	lt .25	Wednesday Night	1500'	1000'	500'	None'	None'	1000'	None'	2000'
Washington Pass	lt .25	lt .10	Thursday Morning	1500'	1000'	1000'	None'	None'	2000'	None'	2000'
Stevens Pass	.25	.25	Thursday Afternoon	2000'	1500'	1500'	None'	None'	2000'	None'	2500'
Snoqualmie Pass	.25	.25 - .50	Thursday Night	1500'	1500'	1500'	None'	None'	2000'	None'	2000'
Mission Ridge	lt .10	lt .10									
Crystal Mt	.25 - .50	lt .10									
Paradise	.75 - 1.00	.25									
White Pass	.25 - .50	.25									
Mt Hood Meadows	1.00 - 1.25	lt .10									
Timberline	1.00 - 1.50	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.

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.

* Easterly flow in the Cascade Passes can cause locally lower Snow or Freezing levels than areas further west.