

**The Bottom Line**

The coming winter storm will create conditions that might meet avalanche warning criteria, but today is a different story. Small pockets of wind slab formed last night add some spice to generally stable conditions. You could trigger one of these new small slabs, but they should be easy to avoid. All forecast areas have **LOW** avalanche danger. Widespread areas of hard snow will make long sliding falls as much of a concern in your travel this morning, and consider that visibility will generally deteriorate through the day. Using normal caution for avalanche terrain and remembering that Low doesn't mean no avalanche danger should make today the safest conditions of the holiday weekend.

The USDA Forest Service Mount Washington Avalanche Center has issued a backcountry avalanche watch for the Presidential Range. Avalanche Watch criteria may also be met in other areas outside those forecast by the avalanche center. This avalanche watch does not apply to operating ski areas.

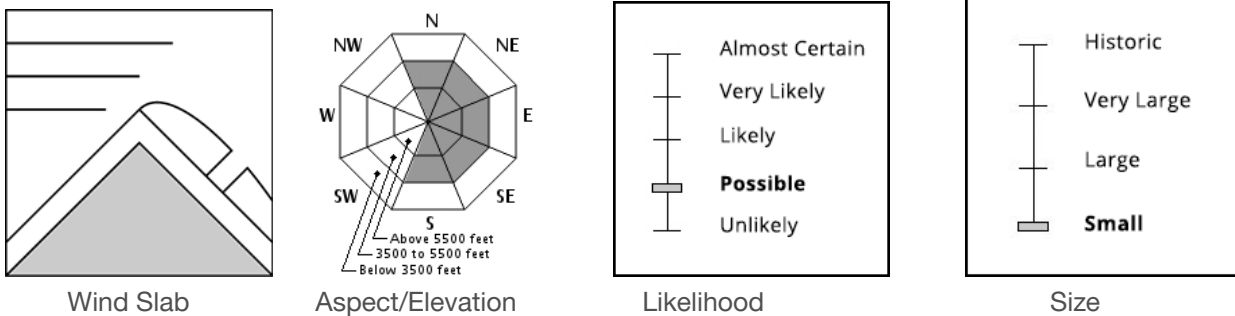
**Avalanche danger will increase through Sunday and Monday, January 20-21, 2019 creating dangerous avalanche conditions. Widespread natural avalanche activity will be possible, especially on Monday, January 21.**

A potent winter storm arrives this evening and will continue through Sunday, January 20. Expected heavy snowfall will combine with strong winds to create unstable conditions. Strong NW winds on Monday, January 21 will create conditions for very large avalanches.

**Mountain Weather**

Around 1" of new snow yesterday was affected by westerly wind that increased to the 60-80 mph range for much of last night. Wind is currently diminishing and will continue to do so through daylight hours. High temperature should be a few degrees colder than yesterday's summit high of 10F, with summit temperatures in the lower single digits. Increasing cloud cover today will ultimately bring heavy snow that will begin falling in light amounts this afternoon and intensify nearer to midnight. Heavy snow should continue through most of tomorrow, tapering to lighter precipitation rates by evening. Snow totals currently look to be around 15" but could be more. Through the snow storm, wind is forecast to shift from SW at dawn tomorrow through E and NE by afternoon, ultimately blowing from the NW by tomorrow night. Wind speeds will increase with this shift, from 25 mph tonight to around 50 mph or stronger by tomorrow night.

**Primary Avalanche Problem**



New wind slabs formed overnight should be reactive to a human trigger but small in size. While either of relatively little concern or easily avoidable, remember that small avalanches in the wrong place can be a big deal. We expect you'll find these isolated pockets on the eastern half of the compass rose.

**Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion**

A mixed bag of upper snowpack and surface conditions precede the inbound winter storm. Most of our avalanche start zones have a relatively smooth snow surface, with a few exceptions of heavily wind textured snow and less developed paths on the west side. Snow and wind last week created this mix of layered wind slabs which vary in density and are generally quite hard and unreactive. Pockets of softer wind slab do exist in the terrain, both in the form of reactive but small new wind slabs and more stubborn, older pockets. For Sunday and Monday, consider our current mix of relatively smooth bed surfaces on thick hard slabs, some potential for an avalanche to step down to deeper layers in softer pockets, and that the December 22 crust is still present at or near the surface in some scoured locations.

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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 or at the Harvard Cabin.