

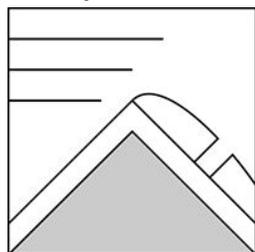
The Bottom Line

Westerly wind since Wednesday’s snowstorm has created wind slabs that remain possible to human trigger. Today’s avalanche problem of stubborn wind slabs is low probability but high consequence, meaning that complacency due to the lower likelihood of avalanches may lead you to travel in terrain which still could produce a large avalanche. Some scouring to a crust may allow options to avoid this avalanche problem, but it may be difficult to visually identify this crust today. Reduce your risk by reducing your time spent under or on steep areas of larger slab, especially where snow has accumulated beneath steeper terrain features. **MODERATE** avalanche danger exists for most of our forecast areas, with the Northern Gullies of Huntington Ravine the one exception with **LOW** avalanche danger.

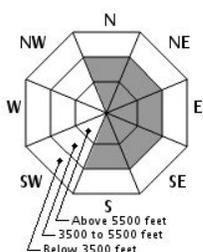
Mountain Weather

West wind slackened from 80 mph to the current 60 mph by yesterday afternoon while shifting WNW. Temperatures remained quite cold, with a high of -13F on the summit and highs below 0F at our snow plots which are just below 4000’ in elevation. Today will be warmer, with a forecast summit high of 2F. Summit wind should remain WNW and increase to 70 mph by this afternoon. Snow showers are likely to produce an inch or so of accumulation, predominantly falling this afternoon, but the notoriously tricky to predict upsloping affect may produce more snow by this afternoon or evening. No precipitation is forecast for tomorrow as temperatures rise to 20F on the summit and wind tapers to under 40 mph.

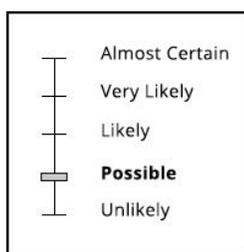
Primary Avalanche Problem



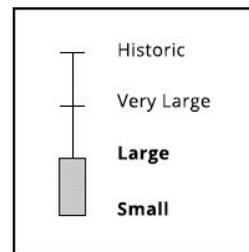
Wind Slab



Aspect/Elevation



Likelihood



Size

Wind slabs formed through yesterday morning on consistently W wind following Wednesday’s storm. These slabs can be found on the eastern half of the compass rose, with the largest slabs in directly east facing terrain. Expect them to be stubborn to a human trigger and generally firm, with a few exceptions being softer in sheltered terrain. Additional snow today, which will be affected by WNW wind, could add volume to these slabs or develop smaller and more reactive slabs on the surface. Potentially small snow totals may minimize these new slabs. Terrain most exposed to wind will exhibit scouring to or near to the January 25th rain crust. These typical Presidential Range stubborn wind slabs aren’t likely to avalanche from a human trigger, but the possibility does remain and should certainly keep you from letting your guard down.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Field observations yesterday combined with the history of sustained 70-80 mph wind events lead us to believe that the relatively large wind slabs formed since Wednesday are generally hard and stubborn. The supportive nature of these hard slabs can offer substantial bridging strength, reducing the likelihood of a human triggered avalanche. That said, the slow bonding inherent to our current cold temperatures, the presence of an ice crust in the upper snowpack, and generally well developed slide paths with few anchors remaining are factors that help keep a relatively large avalanche a possibility today. Remember that these wind speeds also produce significant spatial variability, making it difficult to apply stability test results across terrain. Scouring has occurred in places and travelling on exposed crust may be an option to avoid the avalanche problem. Scouring in some upper avalanche start zones, like the Headwall of Tuckerman Ravine, has combined with sluffing to create the largest wind slabs relatively lower down in our avalanche paths. These combined sluff and wind slabs produced a number of natural avalanches since Wednesday, check out observations page on our website for more details.

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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.