

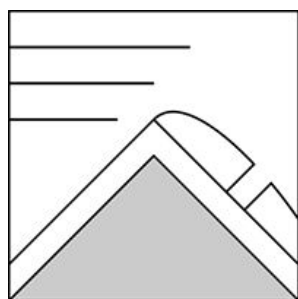
The Bottom Line

New wind slabs are likely to avalanche from a human trigger today. Recent storms have brought modest snowfall totals, but the sustained wind since yesterday afternoon can easily build slabs several feet thick from just several inches of snow. Continued wind loading this morning means that natural avalanches are also possible. All forecast areas have **CONSIDERABLE** avalanche danger. You may not find an avalanche problem on lower elevations which received less recent snow. Look for relatively soft snow on the surface as today’s avalanche problem wherever you travel today.

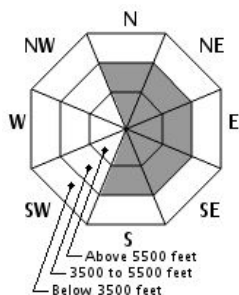
Mountain Weather

Over 4” of snow fell at higher elevations yesterday and last night, as summit wind became W and WNW while increasing to the current 50-70 mph range. Snowfall ended overnight. Summit wind should decrease through today to under 30 mph. Partial clearing this morning will trend towards cloudy skies. Upslope snow showers tonight and tomorrow may produce a total of 1-3” of snow on W and NW wind under 45 mph. It’s a cold one, with a current summit temperature of -13F expected to rise but remain below 0F today.

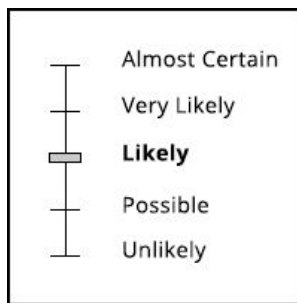
Primary Avalanche Problem



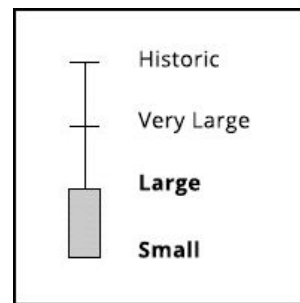
Wind Slab



Aspect/Elevation



Likelihood



Size

Wind slabs formed since yesterday afternoon will be reactive to a human trigger today. Shifting wind from W to WNW last night combined with cross loading likely distributed these wind slabs of varying size for all middle and upper elevation terrain on the eastern half of the compass rose. These new slabs will be truly large in east facing terrain with a significant upwind fetch zone like the Headwall of Tuckerman Ravine and the Gulf of Slides.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

A series of modest snowfall events since last Thursday, with the heaviest snow falling yesterday on ideal loading wind speeds, have created new wind slabs with reactive layers that you’re most likely to find on the eastern half of the compass rose. These layers sit on the mostly firm and unreactive wind slab formed early last week. On some southerly aspects, this old wind slab was capped with a sun crust late last week. These areas were producing small natural avalanches yesterday morning, with easterly and northerly aspects also displaying small avalanche activity and generally poor bonding between layers of soft new snow. Wind has since increased and built much larger wind slabs that are likely above this weak structure. Keep this fresh wind slab over less cohesive snow setup in mind today but also remember that the distribution of wind slab avalanche problems is always variable. You may find scoured areas in westerly terrain without an avalanche problem and even have some icy February 8th crust exposed. Low elevations may also lack an avalanche problem due to lesser new snow, but be on the lookout for reactive new slabs anywhere you travel today.

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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.