

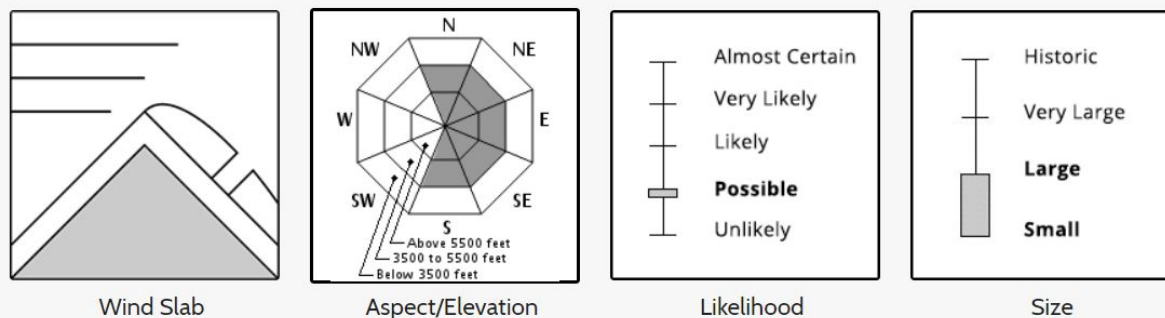
The Bottom Line

- Moderate avalanche danger today.
- Wind drifted snow is possible to avalanche from a human trigger and be deep enough to bury you.
- Wind drifted snow is generally strong and supportive and not easily triggered to avalanche, but if the snow you are on or near does slide, it may produce a large and dangerous avalanche.
- You are most likely to encounter this problem on steep easterly slopes and cross-loaded gullies above 3500 feet. This includes the steep slopes in Tuckerman Ravine and the Gulf of Slides.

Mountain Weather

Today should feel like a pleasant winter day, a break after two cold, windy days. Today, after nearly 48 hours of NW wind 50 – 70 mph, the wind shifts W and eases to 25 – 40 mph. Temperatures will also warm a little to the single digits F above zero. Skies will be clear to partly cloudy. Overnight and tomorrow temperatures will rise further to around 20F as W wind increases slightly 30 – 45 mph.

Avalanche Problem - Wind Slab



Wind slabs formed from the weekend's storm will be stubborn to a human trigger and generally firm, with a few exceptions being softer in sheltered terrain. Terrain most exposed to wind will exhibit scouring to or near to the January 13th rain crust. You are most likely to encounter this problem on steep easterly slopes and cross-loaded gullies above 3500 feet. 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.

Forecast Discussion

Field observations yesterday combined with the summit weather history of sustained 50 – 70 mph wind leads us to believe the relatively large wind slabs formed since the weekend's storm are generally strong and stubborn (OBS1, OBS2). The supportive nature of these slabs can offer substantial bridging strength, reducing the likelihood of a human triggered avalanche. However, slow bonding due to cold temperatures, the presence of a weak (4F) layer sitting above the January 13 rain crust, and well developed slide paths are important factors to keep large avalanches a possibility today. Please be mindful that strong winds such as in recent days, create spatial variability making it less appropriate to apply stability test results across the terrain. The largest slabs can be found well below the tops of avalanche paths, notably the lower half of Chute, Center Headwall, the Lip, and Sluice in Tuckerman Ravine.

Jeff Fongemie, Snow Ranger; USDA Forest Service, White Mountain National Forest; (603)466-2713 TTY (603)466-2858

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.