

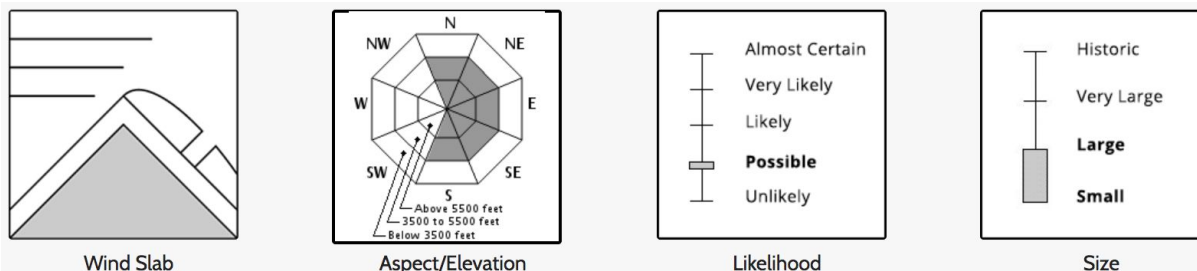
The Bottom Line

- Continued drifting of snow yesterday and cool temperatures have preserved the existing wind slab problem.
- Wind slabs vary in size and reactivity to human triggering in the eastern half of the compass rose with many of these areas able to produce an avalanche that could bury a person.
- Evaluate snow carefully today and remember that wind slabs can fracture higher on the slope above you.
- **MODERATE** avalanche danger exists where you find these wind slabs in mid and upper elevations. **LOW** avalanche danger exists in wind scoured areas, places that snow is covered by the ice crust and at lower elevations, which have much less snow.

Mountain Weather

Wind will shift to the west and diminish in speed this afternoon. Another bright sunny day is on tap, with less wind transported snow in the air than yesterday. Summit temperatures will be in the teens F where the mercury already sits at this hour. Wind will drop to the 15-25 mph range today.

Avalanche Problem



Softer, weaker snow exists under these wind slabs. This density change makes these slabs prone to human triggered avalanches. The largest but also most stubborn slabs sit beneath steep areas mid slope where wind has deposited snow from higher on the slope. These slabs also exist in gullies with a south and north facing aspect due to cross-loading. Several parties turned around and changed objectives yesterday due to the poor snow structure, cracking and sensitivity of these slabs.

Forecast Discussion

Plumes of wind driven snow were visible at ridgetops through the day yesterday as gusty wind moved dry snow into north and east facing aspects, while crossloading others. Hourly observations overnight suggest that wind speeds remained high enough to continue to move snow through the early morning hours despite the fact that blowing snow was not written in the observation record in the past 36 hours. Field observations and snow pits revealed only a fair snow structure that exhibited moderate stability...certainly nothing new for our wind slab driven snow regime. This prevalent problem confounds skiers particularly since the best snow for skiing also happens to be the avalanche problem. Be sure to dig today and remember that last Saturday's ice crust will be the ultimate bed surface for an avalanche though the weak layer is likely to be higher in the snowpack. This could make an avalanche larger than you might expect.

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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.