

The Bottom Line

Hard, firm wind slabs are the primary snow surface you'll find today, though keep your eye out for areas of softer snow in steep, sheltered terrain that could produce a small avalanche. Refrozen snow, and hard firm wind slabs present the possibility of a long sliding fall where arresting a fall in steep terrain may not be possible. As you choose terrain today, consider the consequences of a fall, which could be caused by a simple stumble or lost edge on an area of exposed icy crust. You can mitigate this risk by traveling carefully with crampons, ice axe, and the ability to use them. Avalanche danger is **LOW**.

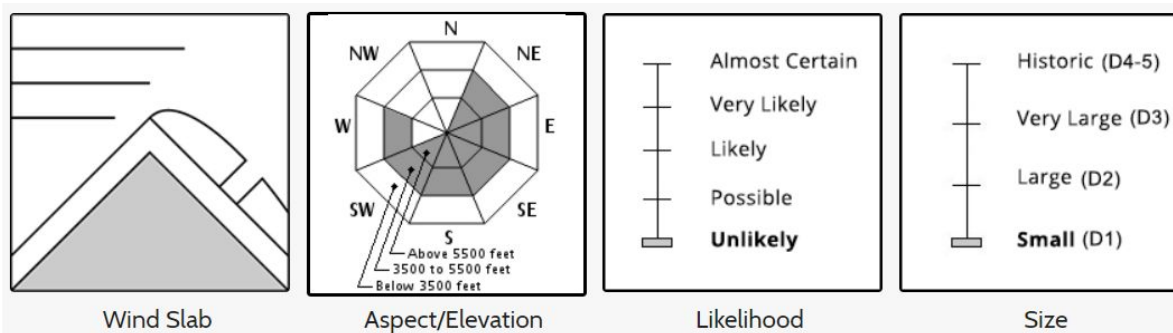
Mountain Weather

Yesterday, NE wind 50-60 mph shifted N then NW with increased wind speeds after dark. Temperatures remained in the single digits F and skies remained mostly clear. No snow was recorded yesterday.

Today, NW wind shifting W at 65-85 mph with possible gusts to 105 before easing off to 50-70 mph mid day. Temperatures are expected to rise to the upper teens F under mostly cloudy skies. Slight chance of snow showers may bring a trace to 1" of snow.

Tomorrow, sunny skies, temperatures warming to lower 30s F with W wind 50-70 mph. Monday night into Tuesday brings the next chance for snow, although warm temperatures may limit accumulations to the highest summits.

Primary Avalanche Problem



Large wind slabs formed during last week's 133mph west wind event are thick, firm and continue to prove unreactive. It may be possible to produce a small avalanche from small, isolated pockets of wind slab formed late last week, though no avalanches have been observed or reported since that storm. New snow falling today could build new pockets of wind slab as well. Be mindful that even a small avalanche in the wrong place, such as a steep and icy snow slope, can result in big consequences today.

Forecast Discussion: In avalanche terrain today, you'll generally find three different snow surfaces:

- Large firm, pencil hard wind slabs.
- Scoured icy areas stripped of new snow from high winds.
- Small isolated pockets of slightly softer (1F) but generally unreactive, wind slabs formed from new snow at the tail end of last week.

Where you'll find each surface is a great example of the spatially inconsistent snow pack we often see. Skiers have recently reported dangerous, scoured icy surfaces in one gully, while a nearby gully offers chalky but edgeable turns. In some locations, one gully may present all three surfaces. If you brave the stiff wind today, be prepared for a variety of snow conditions and choose your terrain carefully.

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 or at the Harvard Cabin.



Avalanche Forecast for Sunday, March 8, 2020

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