

US FOREST SERVICE NORTHWEST MONTANA BACKCOUNTRY AVALANCHE ADVISORY



FOR THE GLACIER PARK AND FLATHEAD & KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST AREAS

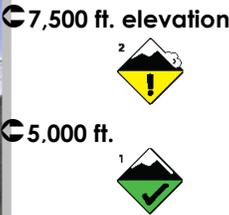
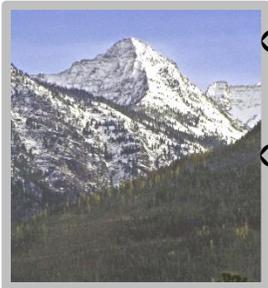
Avalanche advisory does not apply to developed ski areas

Issue Date:
Valid Until:
Next Update:
Issued by:

8 AM, Tuesday, January 10, 2012
Midnight, Tuesday, January 10, 2012
Friday, January 13, 2012
Tony Willits

This advisory is a product of the US Forest Service, US Dept. of Agriculture. Along with other snow and avalanche information, it is originally posted at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/flathead>. An audio summary is available via telephone at 406-257-8402

All Mountain Ranges



Avalanche Danger Summary

2 - Moderate : 5,000 to 7,500 ft. elevation on steep, open terrain

1 - Low : below 5,000

AVALANCHE – INSTABILITY DESCRIPTION

All Mountain Ranges - 5,000 to 7,500 ft. elevation

Danger Level	2 - Moderate
Confidence	Good
Travel Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heightened avalanche conditions on steep, open slopes and gullies Evaluate snow and terrain carefully
Likelihood of Avalanches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural avalanche unlikely Human triggered avalanches possible
Avalanche Size & Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small avalanches in specific areas or Larger avalanches in isolated areas Concern is steep, open slopes and gullies lacking vegetative and terrain anchors

AVALANCHE – INSTABILITY DESCRIPTION

All Mountain Ranges - below 5,000 ft. elevation

Danger Level	1 - LOW
Confidence	Good
Travel Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally safe avalanche conditions exist Watch for unstable snow on isolated terrain features
Likelihood of Avalanches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both natural and human triggered avalanche unlikely
Avalanche Size & Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very small avalanches in widespread areas or Small avalanche in isolated areas

Because of the general nature of this advisory message, each backcountry party will always need to make their own time and site specific avalanche hazard evaluations. This advisory best describes conditions at the time of its issuance. As time passes avalanche and snow conditions may change, sometimes quite rapidly. Elevation and geographic distinctions used are approximate and transition zones between hazards exist.

Recent Mountain Weather

Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friday –Monday --- Initially the region experienced a west flow, followed by a weak ridge, with cooler temperatures.
Precipitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From Friday to Monday received .2 to .6 inches of Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) at most recorded sites. Overnight from 2200 on Monday to 0200 hours on Tuesday most sites received .4 to .7 of SWE, highest recipients were Southern Glacier NP and the East and West Cabinets
Temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friday through Sunday temperatures cooled into the high teens to low twenties and then crept up on Monday to near or just above freezing.
Wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winds have been light from the W/SW all weekend, with a little wind transport

Field Observation Locations

Monday, 1-9-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smith Mountain in the West Cabinets, 11 miles west of Troy Whitefish Mountain west of Red Meadow Lake
Observer Report Locations	
Monday, 1-9-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received no reports since Friday

Avalanches Observed

No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No natural avalanches were observed. Good visibility
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Instability Concern / Avalanche Problem	Level of Concern	Most★★★ Less★★ Least★		
New Storm or Near Surface Snow	★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate accumulations, with new snow overnight and more predicted today. 		
Wind Loading	★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wind loading on Tuesday will be from the NW transitioning to N on Tuesday night with SE/ S/SW aspects having some potential for wind loading. 		
Recent or Persistent Buried Weak Layer	★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cold temperatures are predicted for the next couple of days relating to the potential for development of some weak interfaces in the surface 10 to 30 cms within the new delivered snow since Monday night. Buried surface hoar layers or buried ice layers could still be present within the snow pack especially on shaded aspects. These layers may not be widespread but should be determined through snow pit observations. These weak interfaces could be expected at mid pack elevations within the snow profile or just below. An extended column did propagate in the Whitefish Mountain obs with a Q2 shear 		
Spring Wet Snow or Melt-Freeze		Not applicable		

Rain-on-Snow		Not applicable
Loose Snow		None observed
Other Concerns		

Weather Forecast

[Current NWS Backcountry Forecast](#)

Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A more northwesterly flow will provide an impulse of moderate intensity to the region, followed with cold temperatures through Wednesday and Thursday.
Precipitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase of .2 to .5 inches of SWE is predicted throughout Tuesday. Initially delivered snow could be of the more warm dense variety becoming a less dense accumulation progressing into Tuesday night.
Temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temperatures will cool throughout the period
Wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Light, NW to N winds on Tuesday transitioning to W/SW from Wednesday through Thursday

Avalanche Outlook

Trend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The avalanche danger is expected to escalate slightly above 5000' elevation by Thursday
Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New storm snow followed by colder temperatures could bring some unstable weak interfaces within the surface 30 cms of the snow pack.
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry and know how to use avalanche safety equipment Watch for a possible rapid change in weather conditions beyond forecast amounts Be alert that if a slope is open enough to ski or highmark currently it is very likely an established avalanche path. Check out the site specific snow stability before jumping in or on Know that shallow snow packs are notorious for producing trauma injury and death, washing victims over cliffs and into rocks.

Upcoming Events

Flathead National Forest will be in the second week of class room presentations. This is within the first series of the advanced public avalanche awareness safety training for skiers, snowshoers, snowboarders, and mountaineers for Tuesday and Thursday, January 10 & 12. As well, there is a Saturday field session left in this series, to be held on January 14. Lecture location is the Flathead National Forest Supervisors Office on Wolfpack Way.

Kootenai National Forest will be presenting a Level 1 class with the classroom starting at 7PM on Thursday January 12, and the field session starting at 7 AM on Saturday Jan 14. Total time of session is approximately 10 hours. David Thompson SAR is involved and classroom is at their training facility in Libby.