



**American Avalanche Association
Forest Service National Avalanche Center
Avalanche Incident Report: Short Form**



Occurrence Date (YYYYMMDD): 20170205 and Time (HHMM): 1100

Comments: Most avalanche characteristics and all rescue details were provided by the reporting party to NWAC on Feb. 9th, 2017. We estimate the avalanche as either D1.5 or D2, but list D2 since the victim was unable to self-extricate. The slab, weak layer and bed surface were all identified as precipitation particles due to widespread storm slab activity reported throughout the west slopes of the Cascades that morning. Based on elevation only the start zone would generally be classified in the Below Treeline elevation band in the Crystal Mt area, but for this particular slope Near Treeline is more representative.

Reporting Party Name and Address:

Avalanche Characteristics:

Type: SS (Soft slab) Aspect: West
 Trigger: AS (skier) Slope Angle: 30-35
 Size: R \ D 2 Elevation: 5100 m / ft
 Sliding surface (check one):
 In new New/old In old Ground

Location:

State: WA County: Pierce Forest: Mt Baker - Snoqualmie NF
 Peak, Mtn Pass, or Drainage: Bullion Basin, Crystal Mt area
 Site Name: Below Ted's Buttress
 Lat/Lon or UTM:

Group	Number of People	Time recovered	Duration of burial	Depth to Face <input type="checkbox"/> m / <input type="checkbox"/> ft
Caught	1			
Partially Buried— Not critical	1		10 min	
Partially Buried-- Critical				
Completely Buried				

Number of people injured: 1 Number of people killed:

Dimensions <input type="checkbox"/> m / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ft	Average	Maximum	
	Height of Crown Face	25"	
Width of Fracture	100'		
Vertical Fall	100'		
Snow	Hardness	Grain Type	Grain Size (mm)
Slab		PP	
Weak Layer		PP	
Bed Surface		PP	
Thickness of weak layer: <input type="checkbox"/> mm / <input type="checkbox"/> cm / <input type="checkbox"/> in			

Burial involved a terrain trap? no yes → type:

Number of people that crossed start zone before the avalanche: 0

Location of group in relation to start zone during avalanche: high middle low below all unknown

Avalanche occurred during ascent descent

Subject	Name	Age	Gender	Address	Phone	Activity
1		50	M			skiing
2			M			skiing
3			M			skiing
4						
5						

Equipment Carried

1	2	3	4	5	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transceiver
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shovel
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Probe
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Experience at Activity

1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Novice
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intermediate
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advanced
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expert

Avalanche Training

1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	None
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advanced
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expert

Signs of Instability Noted by Group

- Unknown
- None
- Recent avalanches
- Shooting cracks
- Collapse or whumphing
- Low test scores

Injuries Sustained

1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	None
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	First Aid
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Doctor's care
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hospital Stay
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fatal

Extent of Injuries or Cause of Death

1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asphyxiation
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Head Trauma
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spinal Injury
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chest Trauma
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Skeletal Fractures
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: Bruises, tweaked elbow, black eye, 7 stiches on my temple

Damage

Number of Vehicles Caught:0 Number Structures Destroyed: 0 Estimated Loss: \$2000. Emergency room, set of poles, airbag pack.

Accident Summary

Include: events leading to accident, group's familiarity with location, objectives, route, hazard evaluation, etc. The day of the incident we considered Yodelin first (lower angled terrain in the Stevens Pass area), but thought we could mitigate the avalanche danger in Bullion Basin even though we knew there was about 25" of new snow since Friday. We have skied in Bullion Basin numerous times over many years and personally I have never seen a slide there beyond a couple of surface inches of sluff. We started up the basin and headed off the normal uptrack at the first switchback at about 5000 feet to skin under Ted's Buttress and also reach a more protected area.

Approx 15 minutes later I was breaking trail and was in an open, steep section when the snow above me gave way. I pulled my airbag and was pushed down the slope by a storm slab avalanche and into a tree. I suffered some bruising and a cut on my face from the impact. I could breathe and my head was above the snow but my left arm was trapped (in my pack straps I found out later). I would have had difficulty digging myself out.

Our poor choice to cross under Ted's Buttress was one of the main causes of the accident; thinking that the risk was worth getting to the protected zone. Our rationale was that even further up the basin, you'd still encounter some exposure as you worked toward the summit. I was too comfortable partly due to my experience with that terrain and the fact that the NWAC forecast went from High on Saturday to Considerable on Sunday. Early on in the tour the untracked snow gave no indication of instability (no shooting cracks, no sluffing even when putting in a switchback). In retrospect that amount of new snow allowed no safe travel in open avalanche terrain.

Rescue Summary

Include: description of initial search, report of accident, organized rescue, etc. After yelling to my friends, they were able to reach me within 5 minutes and preceded to dig me out.

Rescue Method

1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Self rescue
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transceiver
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spot probe
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Probe line
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rescue dog
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Voice
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Object
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Digging
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

Attach additional pages as needed. Include weather history, snow profiles, reports from other agencies, diagram of site, photographs, and any other supporting information

Please send to: CAIC; 325 Broadway WS1; Boulder CO 80305; caic@state.co.us and to the nearest Avalanche Center.





Northwest
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Center



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110 W. Pennsylvania Ave, Roslyn, WA

An adventure oriented bookstore and cafe featuring freshly prepared meals, craft cocktails, great wine and awesome brews. Open seven days a week.

West Slopes South - South of I-90 to Columbia River

Issued: 7:36 PM PST Saturday, February 4, 2017 by Dennis D'Amico

NWAC avalanche forecasts apply to backcountry avalanche terrain in the Olympics, Washington Cascades and Mt Hood area. These forecasts do not apply to developed ski areas, avalanche terrain affecting highways and higher terrain on the volcanic peaks above the Cascade crest level.

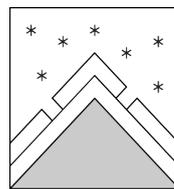
The Bottom Line: Despite a cooling trend, recently formed storm slabs should still be sensitive Sunday. Colder temperatures will help preserve wind slab instabilities near and above treeline. Enjoy the new snow but choose conservative terrain and allow storm related instabilities time to heal.

Elevation	Sunday		Outlook for Monday
Above Treeline	Considerable	Dangerous avalanche conditions. Careful snowpack evaluation, cautious route-finding and conservative decision-making essential.	Considerable
Near Treeline	Considerable	Dangerous avalanche conditions. Careful snowpack evaluation, cautious route-finding and conservative decision-making essential.	Moderate
Below Treeline	Considerable	Dangerous avalanche conditions. Careful snowpack evaluation, cautious route-finding and conservative decision-making essential.	Moderate

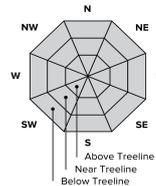
Avalanche Problems for Sunday

Storm Slabs

Storm slabs usually stabilize within a few days, and release at or below the trigger point. They exist throughout the terrain, and can be avoided by waiting for the storm snow to stabilize.



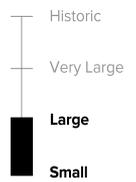
Avalanche Problem



Aspect/Elevation



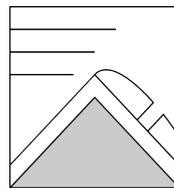
Likelihood



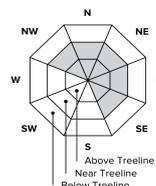
Size

Wind Slab

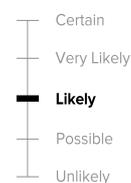
Wind slabs can take up to a week to stabilize. They are confined to lee and cross-loaded terrain features and can be avoided by sticking to sheltered or wind scoured areas.



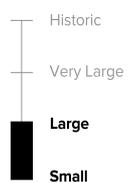
Avalanche Problem



Aspect/Elevation



Likelihood



Size

Snowpack Analysis

Weather and Snowpack

Strong NE-E winds were seen this past Wednesday and Thursday with very cold temperatures. Fresh, touchy wind slabs formed with large plumes of snow visibly transporting loose snow from exposed terrain.

A storm cycle began Friday with generally 1-2 feet of snow accumulating along the west slopes, with slightly lower totals at White Pass and a whopping 30 inches at Mt. Baker through 5 pm Saturday. A slow warming trend affected all areas Saturday with rain reaching 4000-4500 feet in the south Cascades. Easterly flow kept temperatures locally cooler at Pass level at Stevens and Snoqualmie Pass through the day.

Recent Observations

North

Mt. Baker pro-patrol reported easily triggered storm slabs with ski cuts and explosives on all aspects averaging 12-18" and releasing within the new storm snow Saturday morning.

Central

NWAC pro-observer Ian Nicholson was out on the lower slopes of Jim Hill east of Stevens Pass Saturday and found sensitive storm slab on short test slopes and in column tests averaging 20-30 cm down and failing within storm layers.

Stevens Pass ski patrol reported widespread shallow storm and wind slab during morning control work. Alpentel pro-patrol reported similar results mid-day Saturday with storm or soft wind slabs running well during control with ski cuts and explosives.

NWAC received a report of a natural 6-12" storm slab, 150' wide, that released at 4300 ft on a SE aspect in the Kendall trees. Warming above the inversion was causing natural pinwheeling.

NWAC pro-observer Jeremy Allyn was in the Alpentel Valley Saturday and in the area he traveled below treeline found new storm snow generally lacking a cohesive slab structure with the new storm snow bonding well. Wind transported snow was not observed below treeline.

South

Crystal mountain patrol reported sensitive but shallow wind slab on lee slopes below ridgelines Saturday. Pockets of sensitive storm slab could be found mid-slope up to 12" deep.

Detailed Avalanche Forecast for Sunday

More snow is on the way Saturday night and Sunday with a cooling trend forecast. W-SW transport winds should also decrease during the day.

Despite a cooling trend, recently formed storm slabs should still be sensitive Sunday. While storm slabs are most likely to release within the most recent storm layers, various sun and rain crusts throughout the region are capable of providing bed surfaces for larger avalanches in isolated terrain. If precipitation rates become more intense than predicted in the south Cascades Sunday, be prepared for the possibility for new storm slab instabilities.

Colder temperatures will help preserve wind slab instabilities near and above treeline. We've highlighted more traditional lee easterly aspects on the elevation/aspect diagram, but be aware of cross-loaded slopes and that easterly winds earlier in the week loaded westerly aspects. Feel for firmer wind transported snow as you climb higher in the terrain.

Enjoy the new snow but choose conservative terrain and allow storm related instabilities time to heal.

Mountain Weather Synopsis for Sunday & Monday

The upper low off of Vancouver Island will continue to help steer southern stream moisture into our area today in the form of steady light to moderate snow. Showers on the northern periphery of the steady snow should continue to affect the Olympics and northwest Cascades this morning. An upper level shortwave approaching the California coast today will begin to stand the frontal boundary up, orienting the precipitation shield a bit more N-S oriented than forecast models indicated yesterday. This translates toward slightly higher precipitation forecasts for the south and central Washington Cascades with a bit more light snow reaching the Olympics and north Cascades. As this frontal band reorients, a relative lull in precipitation may occur for the Mt. Hood area later this afternoon and evening along with some warming. Alpine winds are forecast to be very strong in the Mt. Hood area today and tonight. A brief period of E-NE winds is possible for the central-west and northwest Cascades tonight before the flow turns westerly on Monday. The frontal band should push eastward early Monday morning as steady light to moderate snow for both the east and west slopes of the Cascades is replaced by showers in westerly flow that should favor the west slopes of the Cascades as a broad cold upper trough moves over the PNW.

24 Hour Quantitative Precipitation ending at 4 am

Location	Mon	Tue
Hurricane Ridge	.25 - .50	.25
Mt Baker Ski Area	.25 - .50	.25
Washington Pass	.50	lt .25
Stevens Pass	.75	.50
Snoqualmie Pass	1.00	.75
Mission Ridge	.75	.25
Crystal Mt	1.00 - 1.50	.50
Paradise	1.50	.75
White Pass	1.50	.75
Mt Hood Meadows	1.00 - 1.50	.50 - .75
Timberline	1.50 - 2.00	.75

LT = less than; WE or Water equivalent is the liquid water equivalent of melted snow in hundredths of inches. As a rough approximation 1 inch of snow = about .10 inches WE, or 10 inches of snow = about 1 inch WE.

Snow Level/Freezing Level in feet

Day	Snow Level/Freezing Level in feet					Easterly Flow in Passes
	Olympics	Northwest Cascades	Northeast Cascades	Central Cascades	South Cascades	
Sunday Morning	1500'	1500'	1500'	2000'	3500'	
Sunday Afternoon - Sunday Evening	1000'	1000'	1000'	1500'	5000'	*
Sunday Night - Monday Morning	0'	0'	0'	500'	2500'	
Monday Afternoon - Monday Night	0'	0'	0'	500'	1500'	

Cascade Snow / Freezing Levels noted above refer to the north (approximately Mt Baker and Washington Pass), central (approximately Stevens to White Pass) and south (near Mt Hood). Freezing Level is when no precipitation is forecast.

* Note that surface snow levels are common near the passes during easterly pass flow and may result in multiple snow / freezing levels.



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110 W. Pennsylvania Ave, Roslyn, WA

An adventure oriented bookstore and cafe featuring freshly prepared meals, craft cocktails, great wine and awesome brews. Open seven days a week.

West Slopes South - South of I-90 to Columbia River

Issued: 9:09 AM PST Sunday, February 5, 2017 by Dennis D'Amico

NWAC avalanche forecasts apply to backcountry avalanche terrain in the Olympics, Washington Cascades and Mt Hood area. These forecasts do not apply to developed ski areas, avalanche terrain affecting highways and higher terrain on the volcanic peaks above the Cascade crest level.

9 AM Update: Avalanche control performed mainly with explosives this morning are triggering large storm slab avalanches at Stevens Pass, Snoqualmie Pass and Mt. Baker. These slides are propagating easily and running well. In areas lacking a slab structure, initially small loose dry avalanches are entraining deeper snow layers. The danger has been raised to High near and above treeline with human triggered avalanches very likely on steeper slopes.

730 AM Update Olympics: Raised below tree-line to Considerable for increased likelihood of storm slabs.

East Slopes of the Cascade: Increased storm slab size range from small to large to account for more new snow overnight near the Cascade crest.

The Bottom Line: Avalanche control performed mainly with explosives this morning are triggering large storm slab avalanches at Stevens Pass, Snoqualmie Pass and Mt. Baker. These slides are propagating easily and running well. In areas lacking a slab structure, initially small loose dry avalanches are entraining deeper snow layers. The danger has been raised to High near and above treeline with human triggered avalanches very likely on steeper slopes. Choose conservative terrain and allow storm related instabilities time to heal.

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Below Treeline	Considerable	Dangerous avalanche conditions. Careful snowpack evaluation, cautious route-finding and conservative decision-making essential.	Moderate

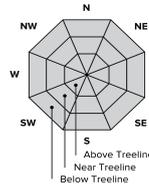
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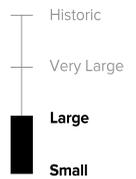
Avalanche Problem



Aspect/Elevation



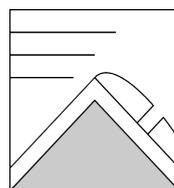
Likelihood



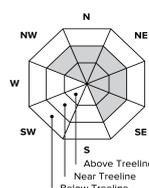
Size

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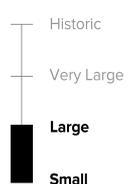
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				Olympics	Cascades	Cascades	Cascades	Cascades	Flow in Passes
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Mt Baker Ski Area	.25 - .50	.25	Sunday Afternoon - Sunday Evening	1000'	1000'	1000'	1500'	5000'	*
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Snoqualmie Pass	1.00	.75	Cascade Snow / Freezing Levels noted above refer to the north (approximately Mt Baker and Washington Pass), central (approximately Stevens to White Pass) and south (near Mt Hood). Freezing Level is when no precipitation is forecast.						
Mission Ridge	.75	.25	* Note that surface snow levels are common near the passes during easterly pass flow and may result in multiple snow / freezing levels.						
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Weather Stations List — Crystal

Legacy Graphs (select station) ▾

